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THE COLONELS JEWELS

by Silva Kingstandish

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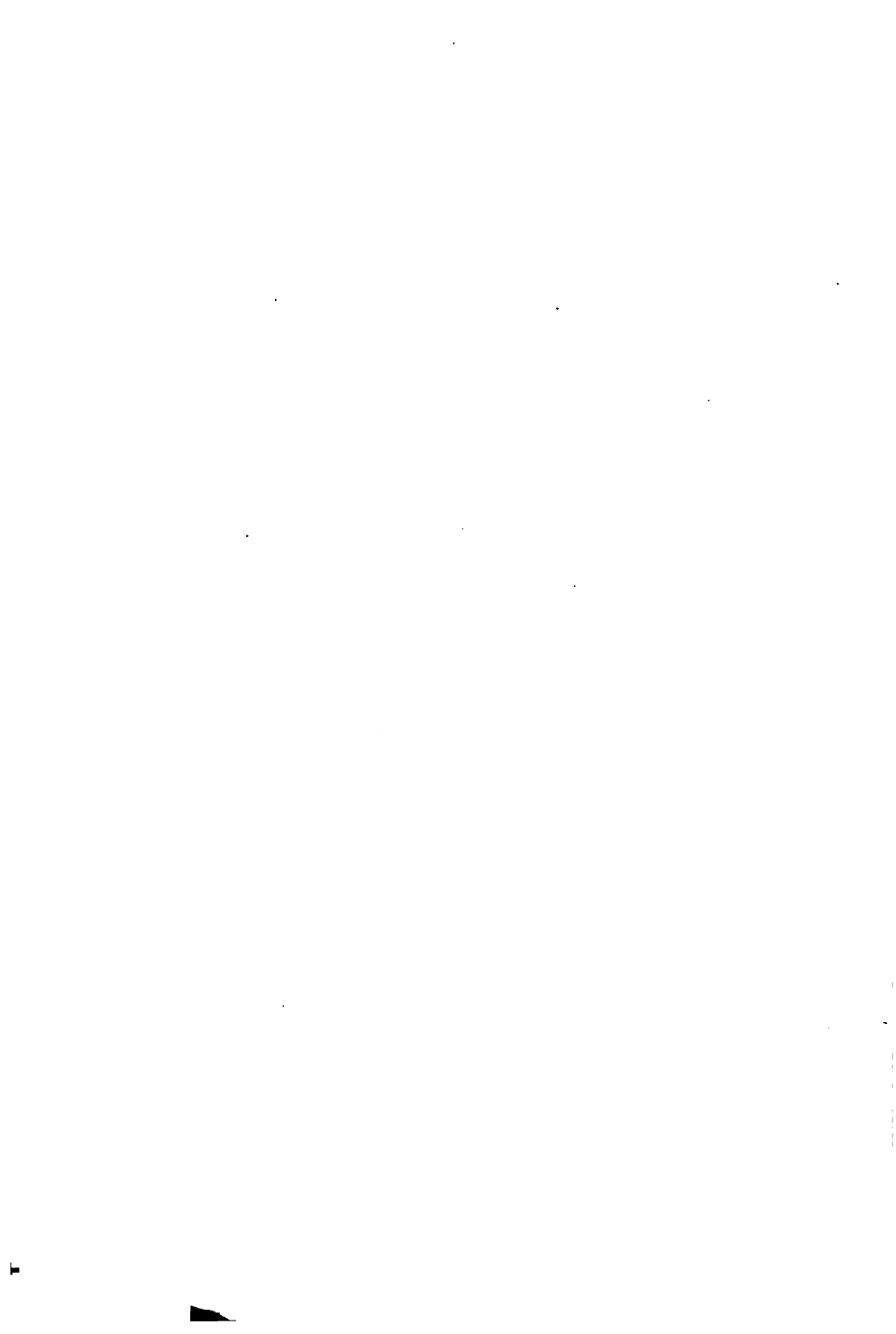
**THE
COLONEL'S
JEWELS**

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FANNIE FOSTER DE SILVER

To
MY DAUGHTER, THE LEADER
AND THE MEMBERS OF THE JUNIOR AUXILIARY
OF THE
CHURCH OF ST. MATTHIAS
NINETEENTH AND WALLACE STREETS
PHILADELPHIA

WQR 19 FEB '36



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INTRODUCTION

GLIMPSE OF THE CUSTOMS AND RELIGIONS OF INDIA

"India is called the epitome of the world, for within its borders the history of the human race is composed of a diversity of types and multifarious customs of its people."

Only a few years have passed since "the eyes of the whole English-speaking world" were centered upon the land of Colonel Silveston's military exploits, and millions reading with interest every small detail of the wonderful pageant at Delhi (Dellee), wherein a king and queen were the central figures in the most magnificent Durbar in the history of the British rule.

"The roar of an Imperial salute of a hundred and one guns welcomed the Royal party, and their Majesties entered the city of great antiquity through the King's Gate which had been closed since 1857," when the last king of Delhi went in gorgeous pomp to worship in the famous mosque, Jam Mussid. "Since India is one of the brightest jewels in the British diadem," King George and his courageous Queen braved the terrors of the sea and others (inland) equally as dangerous, to lend "their presence at the Delhi Coronation Durbar." Being the first British monarch to "personally assume the crown of India," it signifies that "the British min-

istry is afraid that the political unrest now manifest throughout the whole Indian realm will break out, possibly in open rebellion, for to the students of world affairs it has been plain that a vast number of the people of India have never loved the yoke of their red-coated conquerors beyond the seas, "even though their English rulers have always endeavored to keep them pacified and contented by observing Indian customs of caste and religion also,—permitting the great native princes a certain amount of independence, but the natives, in a queer, mysterious sort of a way, have always succeeded in holding themselves aloof from actual civilization."

"This attitude has been fostered by political malcontents for many years and in 1857 the members of the old royal families of India fomented the terrible Sepoy Rebellion."

"The Indian people seemed to have evinced a certain degree of veneration for her gracious Majesty, Queen Victoria, and this feeling of unrest has been noticed especially since her death."

Into the future we cannot now look,
To us it remains a sealed book.

But history will now affirm the facts that King George V was proclaimed Emperor of India on December 12, 1911, and though the Viceroy announced that hereafter natives in his Majesty's service would be eligible to the Victoria cross for bravery on the field of battle. Whether this mark

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of favor or the personal coronation will have the effect of binding the Indian people to a stronger measure of allegiance to the Crown, the future alone will disclose.

This ancient city of Delhi was once "the capital of India. Shah Jehan's palace, which once occupied more than a mile in circuit and cost millions to build, was partly laid waste by the English at the time of the Sepoy Rebellion." Though their Majesties dwelt in safety in that old historic city, yet all loyal Englishmen eagerly watched the Royal progress, especially the members of the ministry who did not willingly sanction the undertaking, and anxiously awaited their return to the dear Fatherland.

En route to Delhi the Royal party visited Bombay, where half a century earlier Colonel Silveston and his trusty company of volunteers were supposed to be ever at the command of the Governor; thus in the following story this brave English officer also formed a part of the household at Malabar Point and was not stationed at the "Fortifications, which are situated between the European quarter and Black Town in the nearby city of Bombay."

"Mrs. Grant, wife of America's famous general, found life at the Government House to be most attractive (1879), for Malabar Point is the edge of the Island of Bombay, jutting out into the Indian Ocean. This suburb of the great city was accounted in other days to be a most holy place, and where the bluff overlooks the water it is one hundred feet high. It is difficult to describe a residence like the

Government House at Malabar Point. The house is a group of houses. You drive into the grounds through stone gates that remind you of the porters' lodges at some stately English mansion." Riding along the avenue, mango trees greet you and flowers nod a welcome, making the "warm air fragrant with delicate perfume" until you come to "a one-storied house, surrounded by spacious verandas." "The state entrance of the Government House is covered with red cloth, a native in English scarlet stands guard at the foot of the steps and as you mount between a line of servants on either side, they salute with the submissive grace of the East, touching their foreheads and bending low in token of welcome and duty." The servants of the Government House, when Mrs. Grant visited Bombay, were "Mohammedans and were clothed in scarlet gowns, white turbans and on their breast a belt with the Imperial crown for an escutcheon." Entering the hall you pass between two large rooms, which are used for ceremonies, meals and receptions, and obtain also a fine view of the garden below, the sea beyond and the towers of Bombay. A hundred paces, under a covered way, thronged with flowers and palm trees, there is another house. Here are the principal bedrooms and private chambers; the bungalow is one story high and runs down to the sea, so you can stand on the porch and throw a biscuit into the sea as it combs the shore. These apartments were assigned to General Grant and his wife when entertained by the Governor. The "walls are high" and the floors of the drawing rooms and

anterooms were "covered with rugs of cool matting, and as you pass in, servants who are resting on the floor, rise up and courteously bend their heads. One will note also a little group of shoes at the door and learn that in the East custom requires their removal when serving in the bungalows."

Still along "another hundred paces of cool cement walk" you come to another house with wide verandas somewhat larger than the General's and still on to another house (which is Tiger Hall in the following story), "the door of which is shaded by palm trees and the surf is near at hand. Here the stone base and tall flagstaff can also be plainly seen—from this staff the flag of England floats when the Governor is at home." It was the coolest winter weather "when General Grant was the guest of the Governor and yet every window and door was open and the party were all gowned in the habiliments of the 'good old summer time.' From early morning until late at night you are surrounded by courteous, well-trained servants and it is impossible to pass from house to house without a procession forming to protect one from the sun, moon or some other imaginary evil."

In years gone by Bombay was not accounted as healthy a city as Calcutta; even today the "Government House at the nation's capital is the most sumptuous building of the kind in the world. The foundations were laid at the same time as the Capitol Building at Washington; it resembles Lord Scar-dale's country house in Derbyshire and may rank among the palaces of Europe." Thus, "pomp and

ceremony are now the first essentials at the Government House where his lordship the Viceroy of India resides."

"Before the high officials journeyed to the hills during the summer solstice, they repaired to Barrack-poor. Now, at the deserted home of the former Viceroys, in the vicinity of this truly European city, many honored guests of the Governor-General have been entertained with music and fine repast under the wonderful banyan tree. One surprising feature to persons unaccustomed to attend such picnics is the presence of many interlopers in the form of beasts of prey, roving overhead, waiting for such times as the merry party should leave the festive board and allow them to enjoy, unmolested, at least a few scraps of the dainty viands."

Travelers in "India are forced to accustom themselves to the omnipresence of all animal life. Jackals and hyenas stroll around with the freedom of dogs in England," and are quite as harmless; this in itself is always a surprise to the uninitiated, but not to see the natives run when "cheetahs are being led through crowded thoroughfares," ever causes astonishment, especially when travelers are informed that they are as "tame as kittens and also very useful on hunting trips."

"In India today the jungle still holds a fascination for natives and foreigners alike," but the last named "find that great skill has to be used when trying to capture a tiger, for he is only really dangerous after he has received his first wound. Many ferocious beasts have crawled up on the elephants and claimed

the bungling hunters before they could lay the angry, infuriated animals low. When sportsmen are not quick enough after the first shot has taken lodgment, disaster of some kind usually follows" and woe betide the driver and others, if "through fright the elephants make a stampede further into the jungle, where they are caught or knocked off by the densely tangled foliage." It is impossible for the most "skilled mahout to keep elephants in the beaten path when tigers take a fancy to crawl up their sides for the hunter," who had the audacity to wound and not the alertness to kill.

"Boar and antelope hunting are popular pastimes and pig-sticking excursions are enjoyed by natives and foreigners." In India "begging is a perennial growth." There are also monkeys galore, consequently monkeys and beggars meet you at every turn. "Fakirs and hypnotists may attract a crowd, but around the blanket of the snake charmer there is always a large, appreciative audience, for they carry around with them reptiles of all sizes, even the large deadly cobra."

Magicians and jugglers are also numerous and various dances characterize different localities. The noted Nautch Dance is performed in palaces as well as temples. This sacred dance does not appeal to foreigners either as a religious ceremony or an enjoyable amusement. Thus "in the highways and byways of India one can jostle against the tall car of fate (Juggernaut) and all classes of people, from the most holy Brahman down to the outcast Pariahs, water-carriers and scavengers."

and the selfish, cruel career of their agents in India ended in the downfall of that powerful company after the battle of Lucknow in 1858. The year previous (1857) the old king of Delhi was proclaimed emperor after the massacre at Meeroot, where the Sepoys murdered even the women and children in the most ruthless, fiendish manner. The feeble old man lived in the palace and worshipped, in state, in the largest mosque in the world, called Jam Mussid, until being overcome by abject despair he fled with his court to the tomb of Humayun. In this tomb, built by a faithful, loving wife, Captain Hobson and fifty native cavalry awed three thousand royal troops after the fall of Delhi and carried the old Emperor back to the city and imprisoned him in the palace." Later, the troops were still under such a spell of fear they, too, laid down their arms at the Captain's command.

"The custom of using tombs during the lifetime of the builder as a house of feasting and entertainment is purely an Egyptian idea. The marvelously beautiful Taj and Humayun were never used for such a purpose," but were erected in loving memory of a beautiful, faithful mother and a beloved ruler of the Mogul dynasty. These monuments of past glory still remain and are the "Mecca" of many tourists who visit India today. Humayun's tomb is within a few miles of Delhi, but beautiful Taj is at Agra, where once lived one of the great Mogul emperors in sumptuous splendor, only having one thousand retainers at the palace. To this Akbar the city owes grandeur—here also (in 1857) the British

residency was crowded with many terror-stricken souls who fled to it for protection against the Royalists' party, for the Sepoys still proceeded with their ghastly work, startling the whole world when many Europeans were massacred at Cawnpur.

The Mogul emperor Shah Jehan "added glory also to Agra when he built Taj Mahal in loving memory of his beautiful wife, Mamtazi Mahal (exalted one of the place). She was married to the renowned Shah in 1615, but died after the birth of her eighth child in 1629." The palace at Agra has reminded many travelers of the "Alhambra."

This is merely to be a glimpse of India's customs and wonders, so we will pass quickly on to Lucknow where the "East India Company came to an ignoble end. Even today Englishmen have to admit the ruthless ending of the mutiny will ever be a blot on the escutcheons of a Christian nation." The cruel butchery of the Sepoys was not an unexpected occurrence from a heathen nation, but for men brought up in enlightened England to call prisoners dragged from the dungeons "plump birds" and to send seventeen hundred Sepoys into eternity from the cannon's mouth, was an act which startled the world with its ghastliness, turning victory into a frightful orgy and bringing more shame than honor to the fair land across the seas.

"Here's the smell of blood still," cries a certain Scottish queen, "and all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh, oh, oh." But, "come what may, time and hour run through the roughest day," and with nations or individuals,

"what's done, cannot be undone." So without "more ado" we will pass on, for by way of comparison there stands out clearly an act of Mr. Duff, a missionary stationed at the capital, when Calcutta was stirred to its depths over the uprising at Barrackpoor, the rumors of bloodshed and that the mutineers might next attack the capital, caused foreigners to fly to the British Embassy for protection. The little Mission House was situated in the very heart of the disaffected part of the city and Mr. Duff gave as his reason for not leaving his post these words, "Unless the Lord the city keep, the watchmen watch but in vain."

During the late Coronation Durbar the viceregal seat of the Government of India was changed from Calcutta to Delhi. This action on the part of the English government was beyond the prophetic ken of Mr. Duff; still it was thought at the time of the Barrackpoor uprising, had the mutineers the courage to have marched to the nation's poorly defended capital, strange things might have happened and Lucknow might not have been the scene of the last battle. "Of all the sad words of tongue or pen,"—but why waste time and words on the "might have beens" when history shows conclusively that while some English officers were bloodthirsty and cruel, the names of Gordon, Duff and Heber are much revered in India. Francis Xavier's, too, being on the honorary list among the missionary pioneers to work for the intellectual as well as the spiritual uplift of this wonderful land of the thugs.

"India, the scene of the Sepoy mutiny, is an exten-

sive region in southern Asia; the name India has been used with different meanings: The ancients meant only the country of Indus, though the ordinary meaning is British India or the Indian Empire, officially called India, whose area in 1891 was 964,992 square miles, with a population of over two hundred million. This is not counting the feudatory native states, whose population is over two hundred million more."

"The exports are wheat, rice, cotton, opium, oil, seeds, jute, hide and indigo." Forcing opium on China is an act not to be remembered with pleasure, but new China has issued edicts and is now striving to protect the rising generation from the deadly influence of the opium plant, the growth and culture of which is no longer allowed throughout that vast domain.

It is impossible in this short sketch to speak in detail of the mineral wealth of the Indian Empire and many other physical features, so we pass hurriedly on to "the government, which is vested in a secretary of state for India in London and administered by a governor-general appointed by the Crown. There is a centralized system of governors for provinces and commissioners and deputy commissioners for divisions and districts."

"Hotel life in India is not very satisfactory. Most officers are entertained at private houses, bungalows of officials, the mess quarters of officers or at the mission stations."

"The Maharajah of Jeypore met General Grant (when encircling the world) at the station, and on

his breast he wore the ribbon and star of the Order of India. A squadron of native cavalry under Colonel Beynon was drawn up to escort the General's party to the British residency."

"The Maharajah of Jeypore, who, like Buddha, claims descent from Rama, the sun-god, was then living more the life of an ascetic than a pleasure-loving and wealthy prince, spending seven hours a day at his devotions, partaking only of one meal, spending all leisure time playing billiards and caring little for his ten wives whom with relations and sometimes friends he was supporting in his harem. It is quite an ordinary occurrence in India for royalty and wealthy rajahs to maintain one thousand adherents in their palatial homes, and if a certain wealthy prince should tire of the home of his ancestors he builds a palace somewhere else and as the town cannot exist without the court, everyone moves with him. Ambler was thus deserted, and the next day the Maharajah as a great honor sent elephants from the royal stables to convey the General and party to see his former home.

"The General found everything purely Oriental around Jeypore, therefore was surprised to find that the Maharajah was progressive enough to have his town lighted by gas lamps; this new departure caused so much criticism, that he was spoken of by many as 'The Maharajah of the gas lamps.'"

After their return from Ambler [the incidents of the journey are touched upon later in the story] the General tasted the sweetmeats sent by the Maharajah, and the time of royal interview arranged.

"The party arrived at the Palace at four and were escorted through the stables, the gardens and certain parts of the lord of the manor's princely home. At five the Maharajah walked down the steps to receive them and led Mrs. Grant and the General into a large audience chamber." When greetings were over (through interpreter) and the party were seated, the "great American officer and party on one side of the royal throne-like chair and on the other the Prime Minister (a Brahman priest), robed in yellow, and other courtiers. At a signal from the Maharajah, or wave of the hand, two lines of Nautch girls appeared accompanied by another line of musicians, who managed to make the most unearthly sounds as they played on the queerest looking instruments. There is nothing especially pleasing about the slow backward and forward movements of these low-caste girls. The waists of the girls were devoid of covering, but it could not be accounted an immoral performance. Even the lord of the manor and his suite looked bored and all were relieved when the Maharajah signaled them to withdraw and led the way to the wonderful billiard room, thus giving the party a glimpse of this part of the palace." Needless to write, none of the bright eyes of the beauties of the harem were seen during this ceremonial call. Formal leave-taking consumes much time and the Great Monarch, who wields such power over India, had taken his departure ere the General and his party left the confines of the palace. Many fanciful effects were enjoyed by the party as the servants sped hither and thither with lighted torches.

"Feasting is eliminated from all such interviews on account of caste." No one dared not to look otherwise than highly honored when one or more "wreaths are placed on your neck by the Maharajah" himself; the guest of honor later lifted four wreaths of jasmine and roses from the tray and placed them on the host's princely shoulders, for which honor he pressed his hands together and bowed his thanks. The ladies received also one wreath, but the General's wife, Mrs. Grant, had the added honor to have a shiny gold and silver cord hung around her neck. Colonel — did not dare to look at his fun-loving compeer when a "servant appeared with a gold bowl encrusted with jewels which contained attar of roses, and as he held the shiny vessel the Maharajah dipped his fingers and placed them on the guests' handkerchiefs and on the shoulder also of the General. This part of a Royal interview is a symbol of lasting friendship." Anointing act over, the lord of the manor took the "guest of honor's hand and led the way from the great hall across the garden to the gateway, where the cavalry troops were formed in line presenting arms." When the party were ensconced in their carriages their mounted escort led the way briskly back to the city.

"There is no career in India for women but the harem; their fate is hard should they become Christians and no especial advantage to become educated. The wives of the Maharajah live in seclusion, behind stone walls guarded by eunuchs; when ailing they cannot even see the face of their physician, as they

are only allowed the privilege of pushing their hands through a screen. They while away the hours by reading romances, watch the Nautch girls dance and adorn themselves. Caste is the insurmountable obstacle which prevents missionaries ever reaching these prisoners of the harem, who idle away their time and feast on sugar-plum dainties."

I am glad to state that there is a wonderful work being done for "thousands of outcasts and child-widows by Americans and other denominations." These missionaries obeyed the command to go—and to the Ruler of Nations they are willing to leave results, and He has ways we "wot not of" even to reach these poor benighted beauties in the harem.

Wives are taken in India for various causes, political or otherwise; sometimes they seal friendships by taking widows, sisters or friends to the palace with the new bride. For some such reason the Maharajah of Jeypore was forced to take recently his last wife—greatly against his will.

Religions of India:—

"The intelligible forms of ancient poets,
The fair humanities of old religions,
The Power, the Beauty, and the Majesty
That had their haunts in dale or piny mountain,
Or forest, by slow stream, or pebbly spring,
Or chasms or watery depths; all these have vanished;
They live no longer in the faith of reason:
But still the heart doth need a language; still
Doth the old instinct bring back the old names;
Spirits or gods that used to share this earth
With man as with their friend; and at this day."

Three-quarters of the population are Hindoos in religion, Mohammedans coming next, while the great Aryan community, which speaks Sanskrit, originally invented Brahmanism, which spread itself from the Punjab along the great valley of the Ganges, but at first not farther southward, consequently the name Hindoostan properly belongs to the northern part. After the invasion by Alexander the Great came the Scythian, when Buddhism was displaced by the revival of Brahmanism in the sixth century of our era. The first Mohammedan invasion was in 1001 and the great Mogul empire established in 1526. The formation of the great East India Company was in 1600, and the rising of the Mahratta power was in 1657 and the death of Aurung Zeb 1707. The largest diamond in the world, weighing two hundred and eighty carats, was seen at his court.

"The Khonds or Koles prevailed before Brahmanism was ever heard of; they lived in jungles and mountains of Central Asia; they belong to the Aryan race; they still preserve in part the grim religious views of the Devil worshippers: Siva, the destroyer, and Kali, the fearful goddess. They propitiate by human sacrifice, principally children. For these malignant deities sweet innocent children are kidnapped from the neighboring tribes."

The Hindoo religion is the oldest on the earth and was practiced thousands of years before Christ. Twice as many believe in this religion in India as there are men, women and children in the United States, and—poor souls—they "live in constant fear of death and damnation." "This Hindoo god

manifests himself in many incarnations, the Great Buddha was supposed to be one."

"These early Aryans and Hindoos had a fire-god named Agni (type of purification). Fire is used in domestic rites today. At weddings the fire is lighted by a priest and the bridal couple walk around it. Akbar, a great Mohammedan emperor of northern India, obtained sacred fire by lighting a piece of cotton on the crystal lens with the ray of the sun, and still another mighty prophet founded a creed and an empire but carried his religion at the point of the sword."

Benares, the Holy Kashi and city of crocodiles, inspires deep reverence in the breast of every Hindoo—who possessed an active faith three thousand years and a written law nine centuries before Christ. In classes or caste, "the priests are above even the king in dignity and tower over all; next come the warrior and industrial artisan class." Last, the Sudra with the Pariah (even lower). These last-named classes are no more "considered than dogs in a gutter, and not allowed to be instructed in the Vedas."

"In all ages the Prime Minister must be a Brahman. They must read the Vedas, perform regular sacrifices and beget a son. The Brahmans have preserved their lineage with a fidelity and purity which no other aristocracy in the world can equal."

"The Hindoo belief in the transmigration of spirits makes them revere all animal life, never even attempting to sit down until they carefully brush the seat or ground, fearing to hurt an ancestor—a lizard, tiger or jackal even might be one."

"The Vedas enjoin the practice of prayer and meditation—the former is the Hindoo's business of life—cleanliness and godliness go hand in hand, for they must bathe daily before breaking bread." Listen, a Hindoo mutters, "Let us meditate on the adorable God, the Divine Ruler; may it guide our intellects."

All nature being an expression of God, the Hindoo "temples are not as mighty monuments of stone as the mosques of the mighty prophet Mohammed." In Holy Kashi the "temples are so malodorous that foreigners are allowed to use tobacco when visiting them"—but even with this drawback "millions of people, aye, even the wisest and purest of the Indian race, during the dark ages of superstition have found comfort at these shrines, where yellow-gowned priests swing censers, sing hymns and sacrifice to their numerous gods."

"The Rig Veda is the oldest," but in the "three periods that followed, Veda was written in the Vedic period, the Ramayan in the Epic, and the Mahabharata in the Puranic."

"The Brahman priest must start as a beggar, going from door to door;" then becomes a "householder" by marriage; later as "anchorite lives in silence, subsisting on herbs and roots;" then lastly "returns to civilization" and the duties which he had cast aside when leaving to dwell in solitude in the country or some mountain cave.

"Brahmans are the strongest social and religious force in Hindoostan and Benares is their city, yet at one time Buddhism was so successful that it swept

over Hindoostan, submerging every form of Hindoo faith except the Brahmins."

"The Brahmin faith is kept shrouded in mystery by the priests, but there is one thought which somehow finds an expression in all religions, pagan or Christian, and is the fundamental principle of the Hindoo religion, namely, 'There is in truth but one God, the Supreme Spirit, the Lord of the Universe, whose work is the Universe.' The unity of God and his spiritual nature which the Christian cherishes, are lost in a maze of fables. They believe: In the beginning God created the waters. In the waters he placed a seed, which germinated and produced Brahma, who was the supreme being in human form. The Hindoos have good and evil gods in which they discern two natures. There is also a future life and punishments of expiation. There is no eternal damnation, the period of torment in after life depends upon the nature of their sins in this life. Then after torment the soul passes into the shape of animals, or even plants and so in time enters the beatific state."

"The practice of adoring idols, now so common in India, does not rest upon the early tenets of the early scripture but is a corruption."

"The human soul, according to the Vedas, is a portion of the Supreme Ruler, as a spark is of fire. At the creation Brahma resolved to give the earth inhabitants who should be direct emanations from his own body. From his mouth came forth his eldest born, Brahma (the priest), to whom he entrusted the four Vedas. From his right arm, Shatrija (the war-

rior). The left arm—the warrior wife. The thighs, Vaissyas (male and female), agriculturists and traders, and last from his feet he produced the Sudra, mechanics and laborers. A Brahman, whether learned or ignorant, is a powerful divinity whose chief duties, as will have been seen, is to learn self-control, pray, meditate and beget a son.”

“Brahma (creator), Vishnu (preservation), and Siva (destroyer) form the triumvirate or triad of the principal Hindoo gods. The present arrangement of the Vedas is attributed to the sage Vyasa.”

“A Brahman temple is simply an open courtyard with huge god under a canopy, in front of which sits a priest reading the Vedas and he pays no attention seemingly to what is transpiring around him. This class is greatly influenced by omens—even a jackal’s cry portends evil and destroys the value of the reading.” This holy and “powerful caste, same as three thousand years ago, pray at sunrise and sunset and also observe five sacraments, the most solemn of which is studying the scriptures (Vedas). They make oblations to the waves and fire in honor of the gods, give rice to the hungry and receive guests of honor. In temples young lads place wreaths on worshippers’ necks, for which they receive a coin.” As has been already stated, the “Brahmans revived their religion and Buddhism was expelled to China and Burmah and it exists today also in Thibet and Japan.”

The Brahmans believe in one God alone, who is in every man and everything, therefore our acts are his acts, our joys and misfortunes are settled

before we are born and written upon our forehead at birth.

"The Hindoos' god, as has been stated, manifests himself in many incarnations. Buddha was one incarnation, though any philosopher, priest or king may represent him; in a sense everything may be worshipped as a part of this god. Now the three great manifestations are Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva—the Hindoo triad."

"Brahma's, the creator's, wife is named, Sarasvati, she is a most gorgeous dame and glitters with jewels as she sits on a peacock and is patron saint of music and speech. Rama is a model son—voicing his name twice means 'Good-day.'"

"Vishnu is worshipped at numerous temples at Benares; he came down from heaven to deliver man from demons, snakes, wicked men, anger, lust and avarice. Vishnu also has several incarnations and is revered too as Hanuman. Vishnu's wife, Lakshmi, is goddess of wealth and beauty" and like Aphrodite she sprang from the sea-foam. Shiva (destroyer) is wife of the terrible god Kali; she has a garland of human skulls and a necklace of dead men's hands; her outstanding tongue is supposed to drip blood. Kali is god of the thugs, who travel through India strangling victims in her honor; this god lives in the cemeteries and delights in pestilence and misery and is worshipped in fear. This is the most revolting of all the Hindoo religions."

The oldest religious manuscripts are written in Sanskrit, also the Vedas and the most sacred books of Hindooism.

The Mahrattas (Ma-rat'oz) who struggled with the East India Company were a race of Hindoos in Western and Central India; they were Brahmans in religion, but differed physically from the other Hindoos and had a different dialect.

The Great Buddha rejects the Vedas, prohibits bloody sacrifices, allows animal food and abolished caste. Buddha preached to all classes; his greatness was prophesied. When an infant he was presented at the altar the god bowed his head, it is said. "The Buddha" and soldier of many titles was also said to "possess uncommon beauty of person" and was born "one hundred miles north of Benares near the Nepalese Alps, in the years five hundred and sixty-two or fifty-two and lived to be eighty years old."

"Moni Sayki or Gautama (as Buddha is also named), played a heroic part in the history of Benares," leaving a palace and place of honor in the royal army to dwell five or seven years (authorities differ) under a tree seeking wisdom, to uplift his fellow men out of the mire of wickedness and start their feet toward Nirvana.

"Moni Sayki belonged to the military caste and was a descendant from Rama, the sun-god." Like all such princes, he "lived for thirty years in pleasure and luxury, governing state and controlling armies."

"When in exile the young warrior lived upon roots, fruits and leaves, and meditated on the sin, sorrows, vain pleasures and canker of ambition, also on the shameful vices and immorality of the

priests and the disrespect shown to sacred things, which unsettled all goodness and virtue."

Later the new preacher, "Buddha, taught for forty years in Benares a commendable code of moral law," eliminating all "bloody sacrifices." His converts grew in number until they reached the result mentioned earlier in this writing.

One of the party of illustrious foreigners visiting India wrote that a Buddhist temple seemed more like a barnyard, with its long line of priests, worshippers and sacred animals in stalls or wandering promiscuously among the crowd; here also foreigners are forced to resort to tobacco even at the risk of displeasing the great god—Lord Buddha.

There are various translations of the creed of Buddhism which one finds written over the temples, namely, "All things proceed from cause—their cause hath Buddha explained. The great teacher hath also explained the causes of the cessation of existence." This lacks the ringing martial force of the creed of Islam: "There is no God but God, and Mohammed is his prophet." Even this wants the supreme, majestic declaration recorded in the Hebrew scriptures, "I am that I am" and it fails in the lofty beauty with which John records the creed of Christians,—“In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men.’

There are two hundred and twenty-five million

Moslems. Surely "the Orient is a land of paradoxes" and many variations of faith in Buddhism, the most important of which is that there are stages of moral development—worshippers rising into higher grades of felicity by the sanctity of their lives until they reach at last the Nirvana.

"O ye who tread the narrow way
By Tophet's flare to Judgment Day,
Be gentle when 'the heathen' pray
To Budda at Kamakura.

"Yet Brahmins rule Benares still,
Buddha-Gaya's ruins pit the hill.
And beef-fed zealots threaten ill
To Buddha and Kamakura.

"But when the morning prayer is prayed,
Think, ere ye pass to strife and trade,
Is God in human image made
No nearer than Kamakura."

The Mogul or Mohammedan Empire began when Baber conquered Hindoostan in 1526 and was at its height of power under Akbar, Jehangeer and Shah Jehan; the last named emperor built the marvelously beautiful tomb for his adored wife. After his death the Empire slipped into the power of the Mahrattas and the British. The last nominal emperor was deposed in 1859.

The Koran, the sacred book of the Mohammedans, deals chiefly with legends drawn from the old Testament and rabbinical literature learned from a Jew near Mecca. Mohammed presents them as original

revelations delivered to him by the Angel Gabriel. The enslaved Hindoos during the Mogul era built gorgeous palaces, and the mightiest fortress the world has ever seen. Jam Mussid Mosque with a court of five acres was built at Delhi. The Pearl Mosque was also one of the world's wonders. Mohammedans believe in predestination and a coming judgment. They have ever beside them two angels—one to record the good and the other the evil. These angelic beings are ever fighting for their souls. The Mohammedans believe also in the witches of genii—fire assumes all shapes—they live in the mountains. Jesus, of the Mohammedans, differs from our Saviour, he only brought the gospel to man to foretell Mohammed's coming, as he is predicted to appear again when he will make many reforms and reign as king for a time. The Mohammedans are now on the alert and seeking positions of trust. There is safety for the British rule as long as the different castes hate each other. It is now impossible to predict what might happen if they should unite forces to drive all aliens from their shores.

"The Parsees believe in one God—two spirits, one good, one bad, such as light and darkness, also always fighting for their souls. Fire, water, sun, moon and stars are spirits of light. The Parsees especially revere fire, which they brought from Persia several hundred years before the Mohammedans drove the people out, forcing them to take refuge in Hindoostan. The Parsees never blow out a light nor extinguish a fire. The rich bankers of the East are often called the disciples of Zoroaster, who

belonged to the sect of the Magi and held the same faith as the 'Three Wise Men.' Cyrus the Great was a follower of Zoroaster, who was a boy when Jerusalem was taken by Nebuchadnezzar. Zoroaster lived in northern Persia. Many old writings chronicle miracles at his birth. Later in life he had several periods of preparation, after which he came forth to reform the old Magi creed, now only believed by the Parsees, but once the religion of Persia. They hold human beings are responsible; the soul is immortal and also a free moral agent. Rewards and punishments in this life settle the state or condition of future existence. The Parsees' god, called Doer, is the creator and governor of the world. All worshippers stand before fire, turning the face toward the sun as a symbol of the Almighty. Parsees do not cremate their dead. Their loved ones are placed upon the open grating of one of the 'high Towers of Silence.' The flesh is devoured by a horde of hungry vultures and their bones fall through the grating to a huge well underneath. The Towers of Silence are on Malabar Hills, an elevation rising almost straight out of the sea. A perfect view can there be obtained of Bombay and far over the Indian Ocean. None but white-robed priests ever enter the enclosure. The beautiful flowers, perfect roads and fine view are all forgotten—one only desires to run and escape after hearing the terrifying noise of the vultures as they swoop down upon their prey."

In this little sketch of the religions of India we see the Kohonds sacrificing to their god those of

whom the Nazarene spoke when he said, "Suffer little children to come unto me." In Brahmanism and Buddhism there is a glimmer of truth, even though choked and corrupted by the ages of fables and myths. Then appears the great Mohammed, who found the sword to be mightier than the truth when conquering and converting vast multitudes. And the smaller body of fire-worshippers, who bow down before their god, Doer. Yet, in the midst of the mighty throng passing down the ages comes One who in the majesty of the Divine proclaimed His mission, saying, "I am the Resurrection and the life; he who believeth in me shall never die." No! No! not through the transmigration of spirits shall his followers attain the beatific state. As a splash from the impressionist's hand let Kipling add a touch to the picture, for—

"The tumult and the shouting dies;
The captains and the kings depart:
Still stands thine ancient sacrifice,
An humble and a contrite heart.
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget."



CHAPTER I

"I'LL HAB DE LAW ON YO' "

A PARTY of Americans were about to board a steamer bound for England when at the dock in New York they were roughly jostled by a big, burly man. The wicked hatred expressed in his eyes and foul breath caused the young lady to start forward, but, not wishing that she should elude him, he quickly clutched her arm and whispered, "I'll hab de law on yo' w'en yo' combed back an' I swar hell can't stop me."

The placid, sunny face of the old auntie became ghastly through fear, and with bulging eyes she gasped, "Marsa, sabe!"

The gentleman addressed turned hastily, but before he fully realized what had happened the offender had taken refuge in the crowd and he heard a low, wicked chuckle as the man disappeared from view.

When the terrified maiden found breath to speak, she looked up into her parent's grave face and said, "It was Jess."

There was no time to make reply as they crossed the narrow gangplank, but, when safely on board the steamer, the gentleman turned to the old colored mammy and curtly commanded: "Take your honey-child over to the side out of this crowd. I must remain beside the gangway a while."

A smile of keen satisfaction lighted the watchers'

faces when later the gentleman joined his daughter's side and spoke reassuringly, "Have no fears, darling, Jess did not cross the gangplank and I saw his scowling face in the crowd after we left the wharf."

The young lady smiled when her nurse exclaimed, "Bress de Lawd! marsa—den me honey-chile am out ob de debbl's clutches, suah, so she am."

"Yes, Aunt Ruthie, I am truly thankful that he put off the evil day of reckoning until after our return to America." Turning to address his most attractive daughter he said, tenderly, "I am exceedingly sorry that you were annoyed. I should have been more careful, dear."

"No self-accusations, pa. I am greatly obliged to Jess for whispering and not making a scene. To have him make his grievance public would have been most unpleasant. Would it not, mammy?"

"Dat's right, honey. Som' white trash powerful strepterosus wid dair razors. I clar, hit would broke me h'art, marsa, ef Jess hurted me preshus chile."

"Tut! tut! Dry your eyes, mammy, he is powerless to harm your mistress now." Drawing his daughter's arm through his he led the way. Loitering a moment at the foot of the stairway he remarked, quietly, "Trust your father, darling, and allow Jess to sink into oblivion for the present." Turning slightly he added, "Did you hear what I said, mammy?"

"Yass, sah. I heerd, marsa."

"Then do not forget. I will not have your mistress further annoyed. I wish her to forget that such a person as Jess lives."

"Laws, marsa, I's nebber spoke on a word, sah—suah me honey-chile—knows—"

Resting her hand on her old nurse's arm the young maiden smiled and said, "I cannot allow any one to scold my good mammy. There now, pa, to please you I will send Jess down to the bottom of the sea and I will write the pretty mermaids to use Circe's enchantments so that he can never return." Then in a most doleful voice she further remarked, "Oh! why didn't the gods invent boats that could ride the billowy waves without rocking. This game of 'Pitch and Toss' will not be a bit amusing. No!—you need not laugh, pa; that famous 'Coral strand' is far, far away; so beware, or King Neptune may seek revenge."

Laughing, the gentleman threw open a cabin door saying, "At such short notice I had only 'Hobson's choice,' so I trust you will find your stateroom comfortable."

"Thank you, father, I know we will." The gentleman stooped slightly to receive his daughter's kiss of thanks, and ere he left her smilingly said, "Do not fail to send that letter to the mermaids, Patricia, and to please you I will indite one to the all-powerful king of the sea." Adding jestingly, "so it will not be my fault if he is discourteous to Aunt Ruthie's honey-child. Will it, mammy?"

"Suah no, marsa."

"Please hurry, mammy. I will be back shortly to escort your mistress to the upper deck. We must not allow her to remain down below until she has to. Eh, Aunt Ruthie?"

"Dat's right, marsa. Laws me, why Brudder Johnsen swars de air ob down below hain't eben

rarefied enuff fer sech po' critters as we be." She pretending to be affronted further remarked, in her truly irresistible way, "Marsa Doctah, does yo' lows yo' darter ter laff at her ole mammy, w'en dair hain't no joke 'bout hit nohow. I jes' t'ink hit am scand'lous, sah."

Smiling, the gentleman closed the door and walked to his nearby stateroom and as he deftly arranged his belongings, his heart was filled with gratitude toward one who ever strove to comfort her honey-child's saddened life—hence, emulating the example of those poor beggars and peasants by the wayside, when thrown a few coins, he felt that he too could exclaim, "Bless you, Auntie! God bless you!"

Aunt Ruthie stowed away their things and after giving her mistress a few instructions as to their whereabouts, in case of her illness, Miss Da Spaniola rose saying, "Come, Troubling Martha, you know Josephus Joseph is not here to look after father's belongings, so we must go over to his stateroom and see if we can help him."

"Dat's right, honey, me ole misses might riz suah, chile, ef dis ole auntie eber fergits her Marsa Doctah—laws, honey, som' lawds of creashun am powerful helpless. Yass, suah—yo' pa knows mo' 'bout book-larnin' dan he do 'bout takin' kar of his cloes—so he do." In a few moments Aunt Ruthie's low chuckling laugh announced the fact to Dr. da Spaniola that he would soon be honored with a couple of visitors, for just before she knocked, her young mistress remarked with the most solemn expression on her face, "The new Josephus Joseph stands without and is bringing the best of reference with him."

The old auntie's "Marsa Doctah" not being found guilty of being hopelessly helpless, the party were soon on their way to the upper deck. Later, when returning, their escort tried not to smile when his daughter meekly remarked, "We had such a good dinner, pa, if you will excuse me I will go at once to my stateroom." Aunt Ruthie, too, was looking very solemn when she spoke—"Yass, suah! marsa, dis hab b'en a most anxified day an' me chile needs ——" The ship gave a sudden lurch, but fortunately the doctor managed by his timely aid to save the old auntie from having a heavy fall—then hastened his white-faced daughter on to her cabin.

Doctor da Spaniola was a good sailor, but ever and anon during the night was heard the inquiry, "Have you seen the Doctor? Oh! Where is the stewardess?" Ah, the irony of fate—some who dared to laugh and joke that evening concerning the actions of their fellow passengers, had the audacity and effrontery not to appear when the melodious sound of the gong was heard the next morning and like Aunt Ruthie and her honey-child, were prisoners in their staterooms for several days.

Patricia da Spaniola was in the best of hands and she was always very proud of her tall, distinguished looking father, who had not only achieved renown by his noble, useful life, but was a lineal descendant of the son of a Spanish Grandee who came to Florida to seek his fortune. He was more successful than poor De Soto, as neither poverty nor serious misfortune pursued his path, causing an untimely end or hopes unrealized. This sturdy pioneer bore with

fortitude the long marches and trials from which the bravest might quail, and after Dr. da Spaniola read of his life of adventure in the wilds of Florida, he realized more than ever that life was "real and earnest" and that he must prove himself no coward in his day and generation.

The lovely Southerner's grandfather, an old planter, had long been identified with the history of the "Mother of Presidents' State." The fine old mansion where Dr. da Spaniola's wife and daughter were born was situated a few miles outside the city of Richmond. Most fortunately, before the old homestead was destroyed the surgeon had moved his family to Washington on account of his wife's ill health. One morning a fellow physician at the hospital remarked, "Such close application to your life-work is seriously telling upon your health; you need sea air and change yourself."

The weary surgeon shook his head and answered sadly, "Thank you, Doc, for your kindly interest, but a sea trip is now an impossibility. Can I leave home when my wife is far from well and my dear boys fighting for their country? No! No! This is not the time for shirking. Good-bye."

This same kindly old physician watched over Dr. da Spaniola and family when, during the last year, the waters of reverses and grief nearly engulfed them, and he was among the group of kindly friends to bid them good-bye at the station. Patricia da Spaniola still found herself to be the guest of honor after they changed steamers at Liverpool—instead of several familiar faces, seated directly

opposite her father and herself, there were now Dr. and Mrs. Roland and a friend—Miss Crasy.

The attractive American girl was courteous to all, but she took little part in the general conversation when at the table, which was carried on mainly between the Captain, her father and Dr. Roland—the latter person Dr. da Spaniola found to be a fountain of knowledge concerning things in general in India.

The brave captain of the "Indus" was accredited with possessing, among his other estimable characteristics, discernment and a keen insight of all that was passing on around him, nevertheless, with all his astuteness he never discovered the presence of a certain little stowaway, even though he would sit perched upon the arm of Miss da Spaniola's chair and was the constant companion of his most attractive, but sad little friend. The blind lad was often weary and homesick. Yes! more than once he threw down his arrows and would bemoan his fate in having to undertake such a long journey with a party who were too grief-stricken to interest themselves in the slightest in any other of the passengers. One afternoon Dr. da Spaniola brought the English missionary and his party of ladies to their quiet, sheltered nook. The little stowaway skipped around more lively after their visit, and when nearing their destination he was in high glee over the pleasant anticipations of the varied sights and bustle of a large city like Bombay—surely they would be more diverting than the many, many days on ship board had been with only the sea and sky in view. Master Cupid

knew all too well that disobedience always brought some direful calamity in its wake, hence despite heat and restlessness he dared not arouse his mother's ire by returning before his commission was fulfilled. On moonlight nights, especially, the little stowaway bubbled over with indignation and disgust when two of the fair occupants of the steamer chairs failed to take the slightest interest in the manly, fine-looking gentlemen who promenaded the decks of the "Great Indus."

Master Cupid would have been far happier during that long journey had he then known that some day Father Jupiter would intercede for the lovers and say,—“Drink this, Psyche, and be immortal! Cupid shall never break away from the knot in which he is tied—these nuptials shall be perpetual.”



CHAPTER II

WORTHY SCION AND ADJUTANT

THE night was stormy, wild—the waves were madly dashing against the rocks and the mad shrieks of the wind echoed and re-echoed through the ruined towers and turrets of Rockingham Castle, causing feelings akin to terror to take possession of the hearts of those unfamiliar with such weird, uncanny sounds. Fortunately, the stout, brave hearts of his lordship's family were not to be named with any nervous, puerile class of individuals. Ah, no!—for had not the lullabies of their earliest years been sung with the varying accompaniment of the music of the sea.

Earlier in the day, before the great battle of the elements was at its height, a long staunch boat, manned by four loyal adherents of the House of Silveston, rowed several persons over from the mainland. No tall, gaunt witch was in that party who could foretell the future destiny of the child who was born that blustery night in good Victoria's reign. Nor did any god bend his head, in recognition of his future greatness, when later he was presented by his noble god-parents in the Established Church of his ancestors, for the sacred rite of Baptism. Notwithstanding the absence of any supernatural agencies the child thrived and grew. If the advent of Reginald du Ponce Silveston in such a wild storm could be taken

as a forecast of that babe's career in the world, it would point more to stirring, adventurous times than the quiet, peaceful ones enjoyed by his parents. Shortly after Reginald's babyhood days his lordly father moved the family across to the mainland to the smaller, though more ancient, Silveston Manor House, as the western wing, the last habitable portion of the castle, no longer afforded them a comfortable home. In Edward the Seventh's time, the passing years had done their worst, yet this noble monument of that ancient family still stands. Today it still defies the wasting ravages of Father Time, for neither King Neptune nor Æolus' unruly sons have yet been able to dislodge the castle or carry it away. Long after Lord Silveston left his rocky island home, his children were often regaled with wondrous tales of the past, wherein their ancestors had played a noble part in peace and war, during many generations of Mother England's changing vicissitudes, and had witnessed the rise and fall of many crown-heads and monarchs.

Young Reginald's life, as he expanded physically and followed the pursuit of learning and pleasure, can be told in three words,—uneventful, healthy, happy. When the sturdy lad arrived at the age of fifteen, the revenues of that once princely estate were deemed insufficient to fulfil other than the needs of his widowed mother and his brother Lord Silveston—in consequence thereof, the other sons were forced out in the world to carve some kind of a career for themselves. Reginald, the youngest member of the family, was especially fond of the sea

and he was most anxious that his lordship would obtain a commission in the navy for him after he left college. Alas! things in this world many times turn topsy-turvy and treasured plans miscarry. Alackaday! When the auspicious time at length arrived Reginald Silveston found to his dismay that he was sealed and booked for the army. Even Lord Silveston and his widowed mother were powerless to turn the wheel of fate which carried the Benjamin of their family to foreign parts. Reginald Silveston received the appointment to serve under the British flag in India, through the influence of Duke Sergis, a college chum of his father's. That winter, A.D. 1858, the eyes of the world were turned toward England's far-away possession and the daily papers ever and anon were teeming with news of the Sepoy Rebellion and had recounted the horrible massacre of many Europeans. These series of terrible catastrophes greatly alarmed the family at the old manor-house. Ah, Reginald Silveston never forgot the tear-dimmed eyes of his sweet gentle mother as she stood on the broad portico of her home, lovingly supported by his lordship, who wrung his hand in parting and said, earnestly, "I wish I were able to prevent your having to leave England, but keep up a good heart, we shall miss you. Write often. Remember, Reg., if you do not succeed, there is always a welcome for you in the old home nest. Your mother will be happier, lad, if you promise to apply to me if in any difficulty or distress."

The youthful soldier leaned over to kiss his mother again, then managed to say, as the horses turned

down the shady avenue, "I promise. Good-bye." The little cavalcade was about to descend into a thickly wooded glen, when Reginald espied the couple still standing on the portico, so bravely smiling he hastily doffed his cap and waved them a last farewell.

Duke Sergis met the young soldier in London and remained with him until he embarked. Just before the narrow gangplank was removed his highness huskily remarked, "Reginald, we expect you to do your best. Never forsake your mother's God." Then added pleadingly, "Be loyal to your country for dear old England's sake." With hearty handshake he further said, affectionately, "God bless you, boy." Only those who have stood on the deck of a steamer and watched the faces of their loved ones and the outline of their native hearth become dimmer and dimmer can appreciate the conflicting emotions of Reginald Silveston when the great gulf of dark surging waters separated him from the ties and associations of his early life.

In fulfilment of a promise given to Lady Silveston, Duke Sergis gave her son a letter of introduction to the Governor-General of India, which in itself was enough to insure that high official's interest in the career of the bearer of the epistle, especially so, the mother-heart argued, if her exiled son deported himself as a worthy scion of such an illustrious house.

Lady Silveston's son also carried to India a costly miniature;—ah, the rim of gold and jewels was not accounted by the possessor to be the most precious part of that valuable gift. Could the young soldier ever forget that scene and the sweet donor who said

so tenderly, "Look, son, mother will always be near you." Tears sparkled in the fair speaker's eyes when she added falteringly, "If undecided or in any difficulty let my eyes point you to the Friend who sticketh closer than a brother." "Thank you, mother." The words were few and rather formal, but the hasty embrace and loving kiss told the mother-heart that her gift was much appreciated. The voyager on the briny deep found several other surprises tucked away in his luggage and among them his mother's Bible. There was a choky feeling in his throat when he found his mother had written underneath her own name, inscribed by his father, "Dearest son, still search for hidden treasure, such delving made thy father a noble gentleman."

Many times when idly watching the sea during that long journey to India, the voyager wisely concluded that he must accept the inevitable for the present and trust fortune to bestow something more to his liking in the future; surely, the laborer is worthy of his hire if "diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." At least, so Lady Silveston believed and her son determined that he would make every effort to prove them true for her dear sake. Base ingratitude was never a besetting sin of Reginald Silveston; in consequence thereof when he arrived at his destination, he strove to do his best despite the heat, the loneliness, the vexations and responsibilities of a soldier's life in a foreign land. The young officer soon learned that the "red-coats" were generously hated by the natives. The late mutiny helped to intensify this feeling of unrest, consequently it

behooved the British army to keep a strict watch-out for plots and counterplots, which were intended to weaken or overthrow Mother England's rule in India.

The fourth year of Reginald Silveston's life in Calcutta was drawing to a close. One dark night a few words were overheard at a bazaar which led Lord Silveston's brother and the faithful, devoted adjutant in grave danger in their persevering efforts to unearth a dastardly plot by which the main body of troops would be drawn inland, thus leaving the capital in the hands of an angry, howling mob of assassins—fiendish bloodshed and ruthless destruction of property ever followed in the train of such undisciplined warfare. Deeply sensible of the value of the services rendered, the Governor-General granted the brave officers nine months' furlough and the much appreciated advancement.

The family at the old manor-house and the owner of Sergis Castle were delighted to learn that their exiled soldier boy was to be transferred across the empire to Bombay, even though under the title of Colonel new and larger responsibilities awaited him at that bustling commercial city.

The promise to write, at stated times, was kept inviolate. Lady Silveston often remarked that the pen pictures drawn by her son were so well done that she could almost imagine that she was at his side as he rested or wandered from place to place. John Wheeling's name often figured in these narratives; hence Lord Silveston was pleased to learn that the loyal, fun-loving adjutant was to accompany his exiled brother to his new quarters.

Five years of service!—only four words, yet, if they were to speak, what a thrilling tale they would recount of the many hours of loneliness, homesickness, labors and dangers of the hated “red-coated soldier’s” life in a foreign land.

The prospect of a furlough was hailed with delight. Lady Silveston’s soldier son received the news in his usual quiet way, but Adjutant Wheeling later declared that it was a great deprivation not to have been able to turn a somersault and cry, “Bravo, Governor!”

The joys and hardships of their life in Calcutta were things of the past. One evening the new Colonel smiled, paused in his writing, looked up and said, “Listen—at last I have news that will please mother.”

“Out with it quick, Colonel—yonder pillows are not safe when I am in such an excited, hilarious mood.” Leaning over to pursue his task the writer answered quietly, “She will be glad to learn that my co-traveler (to be) is another incarnation of Fancheon.”

“Zounds! Pater, who is that ancient critter?”

The writer hesitated, then answered without looking up, saying, unconcernedly, “Only the mascot of my early days.”

“I hate mysteries. Pater, out with it! Was the mascot a horse, a dog, or a mee-ow? Come, no secrets in this new traveling circus.”

The Colonel had never noted any evidences of special sensitiveness in his Adjutant, but knowing some men would resent being compared with a dog he replied evasively, “You are fond of riddles, lad. Listen. Mother may elucidate the matter. She often remarked, ‘I never have to worry about you,

Reginald.' Why? Fancheon is equal to a whole battalion of infantry."

The person addressed vouchsafed no answer. Later, when the writer was enjoying a smoke, he thought the sorry *faux pas* was forgotten and congratulated himself upon its happy ending. The astuteness of the new Colonel might be quite out of the ordinary concerning things *à la militaire* but he learned the next morning that silence does not always mean forgetfulness when his partner in the traveling show entered the room and placed a tiny package in his hand, saying, soberly, "This is our mascot; take good care of him." The speaker made the room ring with merry laughter, occasioned by the surprised look on his superior officer's face when he opened the box and beheld—a tiny china dog. The jolly donor had little time for chaffing the next few days. All good-byes were said and before the end of the week at five o'clock Saturday morning John Wheeling's traveling circus bade farewell to India's capital. Heaving a sigh of relief the merry clown said, banteringly, "You look solemn as an owl, Master Showman. Tell me. Did you really have a sweetheart hidden away in Calcutta?" The servant who followed with the luggage wondered what had happened to cause such unusual mirth at that early hour in the morning. The merry clown (as John Wheeling at times styled himself) became metamorphosed into an erudite sage after the shades of night fell. First, a council of war was held to arrange the program for the following day and a serious tussle to jog the servant's fine forgetting.

Such preliminaries being satisfactorily performed the youthful enthusiast usually picked up the Handbook of India or other books on the same subject to read aloud. "Listen, Colonel," spoke the youthful manager, "Our salvation is assured. Zounds! It says, 'He who thinks on the Himaschel (Himalayas), although he should not behold him, is greater than he who performs all the worship at Kashi (Benares).'" The reader paused, then read, "It seems there are many venerable shrines in those mountain glaciers, but fortunately travelers need only to cast their thoughts in that direction and are not forced to follow the numerous seekers of salvation to the far-distant sources of the Himalayan ravines."

The new Colonel was as eager to see and willing to brave all discomforts by the way as his jovial light-hearted companion. Fortunately, both had a happy knack of disposing of the many fanatics and fakirs who constantly beset their path. They found that the fanaticism of many of the fakirs was truly pitiful, and turned many times not to watch them mutilate their poor thin bodies; they, like the Flagellants of the thirteenth century, tortured themselves in many ways when under the spell of religious exaltation. Ah! the pity of it—in their darkened minds they comprehended not the sacredness of the "Temple of God's Holy Spirit."

The day before they entered Benares the weather was unusually oppressive. Noticing that his co-traveler was evincing a new trait of character in the rôle of listlessness, the Colonel remarked, "Why so pensive, lad? Have you forgotten that 'a merry

heart keeps on the windy side of care,' and that 'sweet thoughts do even refresh'?"

"Humph! refresh—it would need a tearing down sirocco to accomplish that feat today. Look! yonder burning orb is as unmerciful as my Lord of the Inquisition."

"Poor Zoroaster, then you refuse to pour a libation at the feet of god Agni?"

The weather had certainly an enervating effect upon Adjutant Wheeling when the question remained unanswered, for usually the opportunity to discourse upon the numberless myths and legends of India proved too attractive for him to resist. The Colonel, nothing daunted, good-naturedly added, "Then you believe that 'life' should have enough shadow to temper the glare of the sun?"

"I'll sort over my beliefs when I get to Bombay, Master Diogenes."

Young Wheeling really screwed up enough energy to laugh when Colonel Silveston remarked in dismal tones, "Too late! Woe is me! the enchantress' spell will then be upon thee." Then, half-sighing, he further said, "Were man but constant, he were perfect."

"A truce to such nonsense, Colonel." While speaking the young adjutant deftly unfurled and held aloft a spotless handkerchief a second as a flag of truce, then added in serious tone, "Pater, you disturbed my meditations."

"Pardon, lad, but you must listen to the advice of the sage who wrote 'what's gone, and what's past help, should be past grief.' Therefore let us

'eat, drink and be merry' and 'remember our misery no more.'"

"All right, Pater, I'm hungry too. I was only cogitating that if Dante visited India on a day like this, I am not surprised that he wrote the *Inferno* and could so ably describe——"

"Come, lad, drop all psychological subjects, it's too warm. The banyan tree at the Viceroy's country seat appeals more to me than Hades."

Young Wheeling smiled and murmured, "Dear old Hoogley," then after a pause added, "Barrack-poor always reminded me of Richmond on the Thames. Yes. Those picnics and ceremonial functions at the Government House were 'red letter' times even from the viewpoint of a poor adjutant."

The speaker appeared rather startled when Colonel Silveston laughed quite heartily without any seeming reason—then further remarked, "By gad! Pater, your visions of the past must be amusing."

"Rather," answered the Colonel. "I was only recalling your tussle with the monkeys at the last picnic. My! it was funny. Really, lad, I never heard our dear old Major-General laugh so heartily. Mango—bah! If Master Darwin be right—then I beg to differ with the taste of our ancestors."

"Why, Pater! The fruit of the mango tree is accounted to be more delicious than the ruddy peach or blushing pear."

"There is no accounting for taste, lad."

"May be so, but, eliminating the famed mango fruit, life at the Government House was most luxurious, thanks to the English rule in India."

"Yes, Calcutta is accounted even more European than Bombay; fortunately for us many vestiges of the East India Company's reign of splendor still remain."

Adjutant Wheeling did not combat the statement, so the speaker further remarked, "It is astonishing, lad, that such should be the case after the vast amount of wealth that was taken out of India when that famous company had their headquarters at the capital."

"Why, Pater, it shows what a perfect Croesus India really is, when she was able to accomplish such wonders."

"Well, lad, I'm not cursing my fate because I was first stationed at Calcutta. By the way, Danton says, 'After bread—education.'"

"That's right, Colonel. The first college was built at the capital in 1824."

"I had forgotten the date, but I understood the 'present scheme of education in India' came into existence after the ravages of war."

"For Mother England's sake I am glad there is one redeeming feature, Pater. From a political standpoint, I cannot say what a liberal education will accomplish for the youths of India."

"True, lad, but from present outlook I predict that all will be well as long as the different religious sects remain hostile to each other."

The Colonel rose and said, "We must leave at once if we desire to reach Benares before sundown."

Later, after the evening meal, when relieved of the dust and grime of the journey, the Colonel felt

quite refreshed when his erstwhile subaltern joined him. The officer was lounging comfortably in a chair, having, seemingly, his attention concentrated upon certain small rings of smoke. The newcomer seated himself beside the light and on opening a book said, cheerily, "Come, father-in-law, wake up! There are pages and pages about this holy city—if you are equal to it I will commence at once."

"Certainly, son, peg away. If I am overpowered by too much holiness, a slipper will restore me to consciousness."

Smiling, the Adjutant replied, "The weapon 'will fit the crime.' Here goes then—" lifting the book toward his lips he added, "for a draught of that wonderful 'fiery' spring."

"Why bother," answered the Colonel yawning, "learning is but an adjunct to ourselves."

"I guess you are not so drowsy as you appear when you can quote charming Ann's lover. Come, let us imagine that we are back in that sweet peaceful garden at Stratford. We could not find a more quiet spot to read of holy things. Come, Pater, listen now or your doom is sealed."

"'Forewarned is forearmed,' Master Loquaciousness, proceed at once."

Picking up the open book the young subaltern obeyed his superior officer's command and read:

"Benares is the oldest city in the world and was known in the days of Nineveh and Babylon. The streets are narrow and travelers find their way greatly impeded on account of the multiplicity of men and beasts. The absence of carriages makes Benares

as silent a city as Venice. A visit to the Holy City assures Hindoos, Mohammedans, Buddhists and Christians, aye, even thieves and liars, a place in the many mansions in heaven, while 'to bathe in the holy Ganges makes one eternally happy.'"

The reader paused a moment to note the effect, and see if his companion fully realized his vast privileges, then remarked, "We must have a dip, Pater. Johnny wouldn't think of missing a thing like this. Only think, Colonel, eternal happiness for one plunge. Oh! That Annabelle were only here."

"Johnny is growing wise as well as holy." Then laying aside all jesting, Colonel Silveston added, "It is not likely that we shall find an opportunity to pass this way again."

After a pause he further remarked, "Do you know the number of temples here in Benares?"

"There is no record given in the Guide Book, Colonel, but I believe there is only a half a million of idols in this city."

"Ah! then, if forced to take refuge in a sanctuary like poor sick Wolsey, there would be no trouble to find one here—eh, lad?"

"None whatever, Pater; besides there are only a million or more priests in the numerous temples and under umbrellas near the river bank."

"That being the case, we need have no fears when viewing the sights of this venerable city."

"We have only one more day here, Pater, so must make the most of our time tomorrow;" then he added in a quizzical tone, "As long as our prophet prophesies that we shall not pass this way again."

Adjutant Wheeling laughed when the Colonel answered, "You may; you are young." The Colonel smiled when his co-traveler remarked drolly, "Mr. Methuselah, I am glad to make your acquaintance. Come, tell me something of your mode of life. Was salvation assured by a dip where you were born, old Cog?"

Reginald Silveston smiled indulgently, then said, "Come out on the porch, son. The mosque is resplendent in a blaze of moonlight; how insignificant appear the Hindoo temples!"

The young soldier obeyed the summons with alacrity, exclaiming, when he joined the Colonel, "Bully for the 'Great Mogul' and old Aurungzebe—those minarets surely do overtop all the buildings in Kashi."

"I suppose you remember reading 'they are one hundred and fifty feet high.'"

"I remember—I'm just fagged, so let us turn in." Nothing loath the Colonel followed Annabelle's lover into the room, then loitering a moment beside the open casement remarked, "It seems sort of a sacrilege to sleep such a perfect night." Then added, kindly, "Pleasant dreams, sleepy-head."

The officer smiled when his young Adjutant answered, drowsily, "Good night."

The next afternoon young Wheeling was highly amused over the antics of the monkeys who were living in royal state with a certain goddess; but Durga, the goddess of suffering and death, did not appeal to the young soldier, for she was crowned with snakes, like Medusa, and supposed to subsist

on blood. Even the Colonel half shuddered when told that thousands of human beings had been sacrificed to Durga.

"Listen, Colonel, the Guide Book stated that the British Government no longer allows this goddess to enjoy these delicate tid-bits, she has to be satisfied with the life blood of animals now instead of devouring her worshippers. Poor Durga!"

Smiling, the Colonel said, "Hasten, lad, we must hie away to the very heart of the city to see the holiest and most beautiful of all the temples."

The Golden Temple to which the guide was hastily escorting the travelers was sacred to Shiva, the husband of Durga, whose symbol is the bull. This terrible god is creator and ruler of evil spirits and ghouls, who after nightfall prowl around where the dead lie. Shiva is worshipped by fanatics. Ah! what a pitiable sight to see some of them stand with arms extended toward heaven, until their joints become stiff and they seemed more like skeletons than human beings. True! there were many weird sights to be seen in Benares, but the one that impressed the tired travelers most was when their guide loitered beside a deep gully where the dead were being cremated upon huge piles of logs. They were still in the heart of the city and while standing on the brink of the sacred river the guide stated that a rajah was cheap at three hundred dollars while peasants could be burned for only one. Ah, but if their bodies were not incinerated quickly enough to suit those in charge of the gruesome task, they would toss the victims into the Ganges, especially

if the burial fee had been small. For once the youthful soldier failed to find any words which were adequate to express such a scene and Colonel Silveston in awed voice muttered, "For Tophet is ordained of old. The pile thereof is fire and much wood. The breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it."

The sun disappeared and still they lingered before the burning Ghat, three huge piles of logs were illuminating the gully and the travelers could plainly distinguish in the darkness, which had suddenly enshrouded them, the natives disrobing several bodies. The wooden mounds were capped by a white thin cloth upon which the victims were placed, but before the oil was poured, another piece of cloth was thrown over them ere the work of the fire fiends began. Later, the ashes were gathered and thrown into the Ganges to insure salvation and a quick transport to heaven.

The travelers were truly weary after viewing so many strange sights, so voted to retire early as they were scheduled to leave Benares at five the next morning.

When the fatal hour arrived the Colonel watched with interest the comical antics of his youthful subaltern. To his great astonishment John Wheeling, in most solemn serious manner, made a thorough search of their apartment. When the soldier was satisfied that none of Shiva's spooks or ghouls were hidden away to molest them, he saluted the new Colonel, and said, "Nine o'clock and all's well." Then prostrating himself in Oriental fashion he cried

in hushed terror-stricken tones, "Hark! Hear the tramping of feet? Durga is crying for my blood." Clutching the Colonel's chair he added, "They are coming for me. Save! Oh! save me."

Colonel Silveston smiled and there was a mingling of deep affection and mirth when he answered, "Come, lad, stop your nonsense! Father Somnus will send his whole horde after you tonight if you do not settle down, and then you will be unfit for tomorrow's long journey."

Adjutant Wheeling obeyed at once, but just before the Colonel fell asleep he smiled when he heard the occupant of the other bed mutter in most weary tones, "Holy City, bah! Poor, deluded creatures, God pity them. Oh! to be clasped in the arms of Mother England, her sweet land is holy enough place for me. Good night, Pater, I wish Mr. Sun was not such an early riser."

"Did you set the alarm, son?"

"Gad, Colonel, don't mention it. Fancy half after four." Stretching his arms, he added, yawning, "Such unearthly hours are enough to give any one the nightmare."

"Being on furlough is making you lazy."

"Not lazy, Pater, only this trick of traveling in the wee hours of the morning to dodge the sun, isn't a bit funny."

"Poor Annabelle," answered the Colonel in jest, "what a time she will have. I believe I am rather inclined to pity her." In a few moments a certain ominous sound betokened the fact that Adjutant Wheeling had stolen a march on a certain British

Colonel and was happily beyond the pale of his pity or his wrath. While on furlough the young adjutant had fallen into the way of calling his superior officer 'Pater.' This new title was not entirely without meaning, as Colonel Silveston expected to play the part of an elderly father and give Annabelle away when they arrived in Bombay. The new Colonel truly rejoiced in the lad's happiness, still, at times, as he mused there would creep into his heart a great loneliness, knowing full well that no bride nor any of the beloved home-folks were eagerly watching and longing for his arrival. No! stern duty alone was hastening and guiding his footsteps to the wonderful city of the rich Parsees.

The next morning Colonel Silveston received a letter from his lordship, that his mother had failed rapidly the last few months and at that time was far from well. Adjutant Wheeling had served four years at Calcutta, yet, like Jacob of old, they seemed like a few days for the love he bestowed upon his superior officer. That day the new title of Captain sunk into insignificance when this brave Colonel's life was being overshadowed with grief and anxious fears. John Wheeling's hand trembled somewhat when he was forced to hand his superior officer another letter that same evening, postmarked England.

The new Captain's surmises that something must be wrong at the old manor-house proved, alas, to be only too true. The Colonel, without a word handed the letter to his erstwhile subaltern. There, was a mistiness in John Wheeling's eyes when he

read the dying messages and blessings of the Colonel's mother, Lady Silveston. Silence reigned in that apartment until the wee hours of the morning; the stricken traveler sat beside the window gazing alternately at the starry heavens and the lovely miniature he held in his hand. Nearby, the youthful soldier pretended to read, though he mechanically turned, ever and anon, the leaves of the book. The new Captain's thoughts provided the subject matter rather than the printed page.

Three o'clock the Colonel rose and said, wearily, resting his hand on his companion's shoulder, "Forgive me for keeping you up so late;" then added falteringly, "Heaven, lad, is no farther away than England. It comforts me now that God gave me strength not to bring disgrace or sorrow to her while she lived." Captain Wheeling made no attempt to reply and tears shone in his eyes when the speaker further said, "We must turn in now."

The young soldier obeyed at once. Before entering dreamland Colonel Silveston said, pathetically, "You have been such a comfort, lad;" then added earnestly, "Write often home, son. Godly parents are a goodly heritage, remember. Good night."

The heart of the English officer was deeply touched by the unobtrusive attentions of his co-traveler, therefore he decided, for his sake, he must not selfishly hug his grief and throw a dark cloud over the rest of their furlough. One evening while they still loitered in Benares the Colonel remarked in his quiet, droll way, "Were there any comedians in your far-away ancestors? Had the stage?"

"Stage!" muttered the irrepressible youth, "Gad! Pater, it's a wonder my ghostly ancestors do not rise to choke you. Darnation! if Mater heard you she would advise me shun such wicked company." Merry twinkles danced in the speaker's eyes when he added, quite soberly, "I think she would approve of my associating with you in your new purified state."

"All honor to your mother! Nevertheless, 'I hold the world but as a stage, where every man must play a part,' lad. No, I must never ask you to accompany me to a playhouse again."

Laughing, Captain Wheeling answered, "Make no rash promises, Colonel. Fancy! not going down the line when eternal happiness has been assured by the dip in the Ganges." Adding soberly, "Pater, we must take a trip on the river too, to see the city and temples from the view-point of a steamer's deck."

"Yes, son." The youthful soldier did not further disturb his superior officer with plans or questions that evening. The travelers were not able to scale any one of the mountains of the great Himalayan range. At one certain spot in their journeys, the view obtained made them realize that the various writers spoke none too extravagantly when they stated that the sacred range "was truly a marvelous region, with a fauna of remarkable beauty. On a line of fifteen miles are six snowy groups and sources of five great rivers. This mighty wall can be seen two hundred miles off. Ah, far, far above the beautiful flowers, birds and butterflies, the mountain peaks

are covered with white sparkling snow." Surely, Dame Nature shows a fancy for contrasts, which in the glowing sunshine form a most attractive picture. At least, so thought the youthful soldier. Facing the sacred mountains he doffed his helmet and said mirthfully, "Your serene Highness, you have my respect and approval. Behold a suppliant;" bowing he added, "Great Himalaya, I await thy blessing." The Colonel noticed several scowling faces among the bystanders; pushing the speaker forward unceremoniously, he whispered, "Hasten, son, Moslems are not to be trusted; your tribute to 'Great Himalaya' must not cost us our lives."

The Colonel was fully aware that there was much to menace the life of unwary travelers, besides sickness and heat. In India death by snake bites alone was appalling, while daily one meets and is rudely jostled by jugglers, snake charmers, sacred animals, yea, all kinds and conditions of men and beasts in the narrow byways, as well as in the large, commercial, and cosmopolitan cities.

Young Wheeling's "funny bones" were also greatly stirred when he beheld an old codger with prayer mill for recording prayers, and when he saw a low-caste Nautch girl dance the wonderful egg dance and watched her keep two dozen of them spinning on a revolving circular wheel on her head, he whispered, "Buy her, Master Showman, we'll take her to London. The Prince of Wales might give us an audience. By gad! boss, it might be more profitable than fighting."

The Colonel smiled, then remarked, "I am afraid

the fate of Carmen's lover would be mine if I deserted his Majesty's army. Flee from before me, Sir Tempter." Then he added commandingly, "Hasten! Rama's rosy messengers are warning us."

Without making reply the frisky Adjutant slipped his hand under the Colonel's arm and hurried him along at such a rapid rate that laughing and out of breath the tired sightseer managed to say, "Mercy, lad, I'm too old for sprinting." Having no desire to annoy his companion, Adjutant Wheeling withdrew his arm and though the travelers still kept up quite a brisk rate of walking the city was enshrouded in darkness ere they arrived at their destination. The next morning the travelers expected to leave early for Agra. This city had a dual importance in the soldiers' eyes, on account of the incidents connected with the Indian mutiny and the special significance of being the place where motherhood was enthroned and honored. On arrival the indefatigable sightseers roamed over the Palace where the residents fled for refuge in 1857. They were also entranced with the beauty of the gardens, even before having caught a single glimpse of the top of the marvelously beautiful tomb which Shah Jehan built for his adored wife.

While loitering in the gardens young Wheeling said, "Look, Colonel, roses of every variety smile a welcome," and later added, "Let us rest a minute and enjoy the fragrant coolness of this fountain. Roses and fountains! Oh, how perfect!"

At last the glistening building on the river Jumma came into view; the Colonel was speechless but his

companion exclaimed in a hushed voice, "A dream in marble. The most beautiful building in the world."

"No wonder it took so many years to build," answered the Colonel.

"Twenty-two thousand natives worked daily for seventeen years, Pater."

"I wonder how Englishmen would like to fetch and carry for only a daily portion of corn, lad."

"My, Pater, the old mogul codger certainly got off cheap."

"A portion of corn for twenty-two thousand must have amounted to something for so many. Any way the Shah must have had perfect confidence in his subjects when he entrusted the precious body of his adored wife to the safe-keeping of this garden until the tomb was built. Yes, lad, it is worth coming to India to see Taj."

"By gad! you're right, Pater, I'm so fascinated—we must return tonight and see how she looks when the Queen of Night smiles upon her."

"There may be a penalty to pay, lad, if you presume to gaze upon such beauty."

"I'll risk it, Pater; you know I may never have another long furlough—especially with such an adorable companion." Then he mischievously added as the Colonel laughed, "I'm going down the line, Colonel, in fine shape. We are swagger, all right! Why, the passersby even nod and say, *par nobile fractum*."

"I do not think Annabelle would feel flattered if she could hear you."

"She's too sensible to mind a little thing like that." Then in mock seriousness he added, "I am not quite sure it is not dangerous to allow you to appear on the scene before we are married. What would I do if she should prefer a colonel rather than a captain?"

Colonel Silveston laid his hand affectionately upon the speaker's shoulder and smilingly said, "If Annabelle is brave enough to live in a heathen land, I guess you can trust her. Any way, no one would want to marry a sad old misanthrope like me."

"That's a downright whopper, Pater. I predict that you will find another Mamtazi Mahal yet."

The Colonel laughed, then reverently added, "I can wish for no higher type of womankind than my own sainted mother." Then added, "Where, pray, lad, is such an one to be found in a heathen land?"

"Strange things happen sometimes, Colonel. It is a pity that we could not have arrived earlier in Bombay."

"Why?"

"Annabelle wrote of several charming Americans."

The Colonel smiled indulgently and nodded his head as if still incredulous that such miracle should be performed for his benefit.

That night when leaving the gardens Adjutant Wheeling halted, doffed his cap and said, "Queen of Night, I shall never forget your sweet, sweet smile. Good-bye, beautiful Taj, the fragrance of this evening I shall never forget as long as I live."

The Colonel muttered, "Amen" as they passed, seemingly, out of paradise to the shadowed road of every-day life.

The next morning they were on the road again journeying toward Meerut, where the Sepoys commenced operations in earnest and startled the civilized world by a horrible massacre. There, too, even unoffending parties like women and children did not escape the dread vengeance of the infuriated mutineers. The next day the travelers retraced their steps and returned to Delhi, to which city the conquering Sepoys had marched. The mosque Jam Mussid, the most notable building of the kind in India, had been converted into a fort. At this British military station Colonel Silveston presented a letter of introduction, written by the Governor-General at Calcutta, and received a hearty welcome by officers in command.

Delhi is accounted to be the Rome of India. With or without escorts, Colonel Silveston and Adjutant Wheeling spent several enjoyable days visiting the Palace and many other interesting monuments of the late Mogul emperor, who with his wife and son had been transported over the seas, where he died in 1862. Passing sentence on the feeble old King of Delhi was the last official act of the representative of the once powerful East India Company.

One day during their stay at Delhi, Adjutant Wheeling remarked, "We must hunt up some of those old ancestral monuments. I believe authentic ones can be found which date before Christ."

"Captain Chichester, I was not aware until this very minute that I was accompanied by so keen a lover of archæology."

Smiling, their escort vouchsafed the knowledge,

saying, "Adjutant Wheeling—pardon, Captain, I believe—can here indulge the bent of his nature to the utmost, for between Cashmere Gate and Kutab there are only eleven miles of temples, mosques and mausoleums."

Captain Chichester was called away and when the door closed the young soldier laughed gleefully, then said, "Honored Pater, there is another chance for me to go straight down the line." That very afternoon when wandering around the suburbs the young enthusiast said, "Colonel, can you describe the difference between this locality and Jerusalem after another scourge of war?"

"Give it up. Too tired for conundrums."

"Look, Colonel, at yonder ruins where those vultures are perched. Will you find such monuments of the past in the Jews' Holy City?"

"No, lad, its glory is covered or carried away." Then adding sorrowfully as if muttering a soliloquy, Lady Silveston's soldier boy said, "Is it nothing to you all ye that pass by; behold, and see if there is any sorrow like unto my sorrow, for all that pass by hiss and wag their head at the daughter of Jerusalem saying, 'Is this the city that men call the perfection of beauty. The joy of the whole earth.'"

The newly brevetted Captain made no reply at once, seeming to be so engrossed with his task of reading an inscription, while in reality his eyes scanned the landscape as if he, too, was gazing on a city desolate. Later, he quietly remarked, "Pater, whenever did you store away so much of Holy Writ?"

"Lad, I was blessed with parents who believed

that the Scriptures were a safe foundation for their children's education and so bound them around our necks, like the Maharajah's wreaths, in our earliest years."

That evening the travelers settled themselves comfortably; amidst rings of smoke the Colonel laid aside his pipe and said rather regretfully, "It seems ages since we were boys in England. My! I was a regular duck in those days."

The new Captain sat beside the open casement gazing without, and not vouchsafing a reply the speaker further muttered softly, "Fairest, he dreameth of thee."

Laughing, young Wheeling said, "No nonsense, Pater. Peg away, no digression allowed. I'm dreadfully interested in that new species of water-ducks."

"Merry jester. I'm afraid the species is rather antique."

Smiling, the person addressed quickly answered, "Ancient or modern will serve our purpose." Then imitating a farmer's drawl he added, "Fur ducks is ducks." Changing from mirth to soberness, he further remarked, "Kindly proceed, Colonel, I'm waiting."

"Reginald Silveston was an every-day sort of a boy, lad, and I am afraid that there is nothing much to tell." The Colonel leaned over to deposit some ashes on a tray, then added, wistfully, "My daring escapades caused mother some anxiety. One day I grieved her especially by being very rude to our chaplain, when trying to save me from having an untimely end in a watery grave. Father was a man

of few words. Learning of my misdemeanor, he called me to his study and said, 'How does your conduct this afternoon appear in the light of the Golden Rule, son?' Then added, half wistfully, before I could frame a reply, 'I do not think I need to tell you what is your duty, Reginald.'"

The youthful dreamer beside the window remaining silent the new Colonel remarked, "Well, lad, I apologized, much as I hated to do so, but the trials of the day sank into insignificance when father patted me on the shoulder that night and said affectionately, 'Your grandfather would be proud of his namesake, son; he had little patience with craven acts and cowards.'" A loving tenderness crept into the speaker's voice when he added, "Father drew me to him when I reached up to receive his good-night kiss and half whispered, 'Sitting at the feet of the Divine Teacher makes heroes and martyrs, Reginald. Never forget, son, that your grandfather found an inspiration in the 'Sermon on the Mount' many times during his long and useful life."

Captain Wheeling rose abruptly and passed out to the veranda. During the recital a feeling akin to homesickness overwhelmed him. Yes, there was a mistiness in his eyes as he peered out into the darkness, for he, too, had most sacred memories of a gray-headed father who was still living in a quiet English village. There were no drones in that humble home. No! every one had his appointed task, yet the atmosphere was so laden with love and kindness that even the flowers nodded a welcome to those whose homes were not thus sanctified by

the presence of "Love Divine"—nor the solace of human affection to mitigate the sad conditions of their cold, cheerless lives.

The next morning the travelers strolled over to the Palace and while standing before a window-niche above their heads, where once reposed the world-renowned Peacock Throne, Captain Chichester read the inscription in Persian gilt characters. What mockery the words seemed to the listeners when he said, "If there be an elysium on earth, it is this, it is this, it is this:" when their eyes rested upon a scene over which could better be inscribed the word "Ichabod" or "All is vanity."

Captain Chichester further remarked as they loitered beneath the niche: "The throne, Colonel, was made of gold encrusted with jewels, and was overshadowed by two huge umbrellas. These emblems of royalty were composed of scarlet cloth, pearl fringe, gold and diamonds. In this niche of wonderful mosaics and dome-like ceiling of solid silver sat the kings and their sons, in state, attended by eunuchs attired in a blaze of Indian color holding in their hands enormous peacock fans."

Captain Chichester and the Colonel laughed when the other member of the party mournfully remarked, "Gad! Where are those eunuchs now?"

The travelers enjoyed the week spent at the famous mosque fort; the youthful archæologist roamed among the tombs and relics of the past to his heart's content, and his superior officer, too, found much to interest him in Delhi, the historic Rome of India.

It was the eleventh of May, 1857, when Delhi was captured by the mutineers, and at the end of June when so many Europeans were massacred at Cawnpur. The thirteenth of the same month many Europeans took refuge in the English residency at Lucknow. Here Sir Henry Lawrence died and his successor, Brigadier Ingles, held out until September twenty-fifth, until relieved by Havelock. On the ninth of November Sir Colin Campbell marched with forty-two hundred troops from Cawnpur and routed the mutineers.

March 3, 1858, seventeen forts were in possession of the English; in June of the same year no city or fortress was in the mutineers' hands and the able rebel leader Tantai Topee was at last taken and hanged. Lucknow, the scene of the late struggle, was of especial interest in the eyes of the British officers and Captain Wheeling, when standing in line of battle, remarked, "Poor, misguided Sepoys; I guess they would have blown me away too. I never could have been equal to manning a cannon for such ghastly business."

"Yes, lad, few tragedies in modern history have been more terrible."

"And yet, Colonel, the defense of Lucknow is accounted the most brilliant in the annals of heroism. Only imagine women and children spending the summer in the Residency's cellar, listening to the rattling of the musketry and the shrieks of the bursting shells."

"Avaunt, gruesome thoughts, lad, let us rather rejoice that the mighty Havelock was able to unloose

those prison doors and escort them through the enemy's lines to safety, even though laden with much treasure."

Later, when loitering beside the graves of Sir Henry Lawrence and the mighty deliverer Havelock, the young Captain remarked in subdued tones, "Pater, did you see those Mussulmans stare and scowl when we took off our helmets at Havelock's grave?"

"Yes, I did. We must be careful; they certainly looked anything but friendly."

"When you think of it, Pater, I suppose they feel justified in hating us."

"Yes, Sir Captain, it must be a severe punishment for them to behold their conquerors using their sacred mosque as a military station. With all England's power to dethrone every prince and pillage every treasury and shrine, there is one thing that even the Prince of Wales was not able to accomplish when here."

"What was that, Colonel?"

"To force a Hindoo gentleman to break bread with an Englishman."

"Ah, the insurmountable caste barrier."

"Yes, lad, her gracious Majesty's son, too, learned that India was indeed a 'paradise of priests' and that they reign supreme as the all-powerful King of Day."

When the travelers arrived at Jeypore they had the good fortune to receive an invitation to join the party of a celebrated American general who was making a truly royal progress toward the great capital from which they had so recently departed.

The famous American and his party, too, found much of interest in Jeypore and visited the mint and the rendezvous of many tigers. Young Wheeling was surprised to learn that the man-eaters become more keen for such sport after their teeth become tender with the infirmities of age and that they search diligently for the society of those who in their earlier years they are rather inclined to shun.

Jeypore is also celebrated for its jewelry. One day the Colonel dryly remarked, "I am inclined to think that Annabelle will need something beside jewelry when you are married; surely love will fly out the window if you do not husband your resources better."

"All right, Pater, I'll try and remember your sage advice."

"How long?"

"Forever, most noble Philo."

"Perhaps it would be well, for Annabelle's sake, to summon the Maharajah to listen to your oath of allegiance."

"I prefer the Witch of Endor as witness."

"Ah, I suppose you desire to learn the fate of the Great Mogul."

The Colonel smiled when Captain Wheeling answered rather scornfully, "Diamonds, bah! I'm astonished you suggest anything so puerile, when you know that I'm following in the shadow of great generals, colonels and mighty moguls. My! Pater, Annabelle never dreamed what an honored man she is to marry."

Smiling, the Colonel answered, "Beware, Sir Cox-

comb, your fiancée may not approve of you in this new rôle; be warned, this newly acquired greatness may be your undoing."

The new Captain in boyish glee leaned over and as he raised a glass from the table exclaimed, "Health ter me, darlint." Then added after a pause, "A handsome Colonel might be my undoing, but greatness never!"

"Handsome Colonel—bah! Then you are surely safe."

"Thanks, Pater, for so comforting an assurance." Then he added soberly, "Gad, Colonel, I wonder if that great nabob, Prince Ram-a-Tam-Tam, with titles galore—is a real swagger aristocrat?"

"He certainly is. Why, lad, have you forgotten that he and the great Buddha claim a common ancestor in the sun-god?"

"Well, then, Pater, when I stand in the worshipful presence of this hermit-like scion of that sizzling Ram, pinch me or pierce me with a glance if I attempt to transgress any of the numerous proscribed rules of Oriental etiquette, for in my longing to snatch a peep of a real, live Rajput princess I may become absent-minded." Looking shyly at the figure lolling lazily back in his chair smoking he added, "If I succeed in finding a great beauty, shall I capture her for you?"

Laughing, the Colonel remarked, sententiously, "You are not fascinating enough to pose as John Alden."

"A cut, by jingo! and from my own peculiar friend." The Colonel smiled when the speaker

added dolefully, "Can I ever survive this shock?" Then glancing at his watch, he rose hastily, further saying, "We'll both need an earthquake shock if we expect to arrive at the Residency in time for dinner."

The exigency of the occasion demanded hasty action, so the Colonel forsook his cozy nook at once and in less than half an hour afterwards a servant, with lighted lantern, escorted them to their desired destination.

The traveler's sojourn at Jeypore was drawing to a close and they noted the quickly passing hours with feelings akin to regret. The gorgeous pageants given in honor of the famous American General enabled them to see the town and surrounding country under most favorable conditions and the young Captain especially was most happy "to go down the line" in such regal state and cared not a rap that he owed his good fortune to the courtesy of officers who were much higher in rank than himself.

The evening spent at the Residency proved to be a most felicitous occasion and despite their late hours the travelers were up betimes the next morning, having received an invitation to accompany the American General and his party to Ambler and view the surrounding country from the heights of a deserted palace and town.

The travelers had ridden in sedan chairs and many other ways since leaving Calcutta but had never mounted an elephant. That morning Captain Wheeling forgot to grumble about the earliness of the hour set for rising, for the opportunity to

follow in the train of a General whom princes sought to pay homage to, might never again be accorded him, or to ride upon a richly caparisoned elephant from the royal stables. Elephants had been pressed into service for the last part of their journey to Ambler, on account of the roads not being open for carriages the entire way to that deserted town.

Much to the amusement of the party ere they mounted, the mahouts commanded the elephants, saying, "Salaam Kuro." Noting a tempting bun in the keeper's hands, the huge beasts raised their trunks to their foreheads after the manner of all polite and well-bred elephants who desire to ask a favor or say "Please." Later, the Colonel and his merry *bête noir* followed the example of the distinguished General and mounted the steps to the houdah—theirs happened to be the jaunting car kind of an affair, with feet dangling over the side they held on like grim death when the mammoth beast rose to his feet, preparatory to starting forward toward a town which should in truth be named "Forsaken."

To a foreigner this ride could not fail to be of interest apart from the beauties of the landscape, for they passed camels heavily laden, the ubiquitous monkeys chattering and skipping across the road, they would watch the passers-by and blink at them from walls and trees; fortunately the leopards and other beasts keep them from propagating too lively.

"Look, Colonel, a grain wagon. By jingo! A barouche driven by camels. Gad, Pater, and pigs drinking?"

"How unusual," drawled the Colonel.

"Perhaps if you glance over yonder at that glistening pool you may imagine the millennium has dawned."

The Colonel turned and while gazing in the direction indicated, in amazement exclaimed, "Crocodiles! That is truly a queer combination." After a pause he added, "I wish mother could have seen those brown furze-covered hills and gorgeous peacocks."

The Captain noted the touch of sadness in the Colonel's voice, so remarked quietly, "I used to think it was wonderful to watch a couple of peacocks when father took his small son to the Zoological Gardens. Then I little dreamed that I should live to see them illuminate a hillside as they do today."

The Colonel then arrested his companion's attention to a closer range of vision by remarking, "Lad, these mahouts (elephant drivers) seem quite a genius in their way; watch them guide these huge beasts. Somehow, to me it seems inconceivable that they should be as tame as kittens."

"It truly does, Pater. Wonder if it hurts them when the mahouts stick them on their heads. Tell me, Colonel, is this where the term 'thick-headed' originated?"

The person addressed shrugged his shoulders and replied most soberly, "I recommend you to write to the Information Bureau of the *London Times*."

"Wise suggestion, Father Philo." With a comical grimace the youthful Captain added, "Oh, for a horse. This wobbling creature makes me half sick."

"Courage, lad, look! Up yonder is the Palace, we will soon be there. Ah, there comes a batch of

color down the hillside. The girls are carrying water bottles on their heads, their bright gowns of red and green ought to divert you."

The Colonel laughed when Captain Wheeling answered in a most lugubrious tone, "Nothing but a Rajput princess could do that. Listen, Master Faust, while I tell you of this beautiful creature. They say she has adorable eyes like a gazelle, the clearest and softest skin, the most dainty hands and feet and oh,—a form that would turn Venus green with envy. Fancy! such——"

The description being sufficiently graphic to satisfy the Colonel he interrupted the speaker by remarking, "I see there is nothing left for you to do but to desert the army. I will inform Annabelle that you found your affinity in a Maharajah harem."

The Colonel gave his companion a kindly glance, but he was highly amused when his merry *bête noir* looked up suddenly and said, "Maharajahs only bother with exalted folks like colonels and generals, shall I tell him your brother is a great mogul too? He might allow you to marry one of his superfluous daughters." The speaker drew closer to Colonel Silveston and there was a touch of pathos in his voice when he added, "I think you had better allow me to speak, for I cannot think what is going to happen to you when I am not at hand to look after you."

The Colonel answered with deep feeling as he laid his hand affectionately on his companion's shoulder and said, "None realizes more than I do how much I shall miss you, lad. No wonder Anna-

belle forsook her country for your sake, and I hope the future may hold much joy for you both."

The youthful Captain was so touched with the Colonel's kindly expression of regard he could only falteringly answer, "I shall never forget your kindness, Pater."

The time had arrived for them to hold on again, as the huge beast sat down near the entrance of the deserted palace. This feat performed the party dismounted and wandered at will even into the stone apartments, illy lighted, where once slept the beauties of the Maharajah's harem.

The view of the town and surrounding country from that hilly crest was enjoyed by all, despite the fact that a most unwelcome individual named old Sol insolently intruded his presence. The Maharajah and the officers in the British army well knew that resistance had always been futile, consequently they warned the American General and party to keep aloof from him as much as possible by seeking a refuge within the Palace and from that sheltered vantage ground view things generally both within and without. There is so much sunshine in the land of the Maharajahs that the natives glory in a mist, and during all the wanderings of those English officers they had only seen a few stray gray clouds.

"How these Hindoo and Mohammedan servants can run and bear burdens a day like this is a mystery to me."

"By the way, Colonel, methinks me of an old rhyme:

"There was once a fuzzy old Hindoo
Who said, I make clothes mighty thin do,
Except in July, when the mercury's high,
Then I often make my old skin do."

The Adjutant laughed when his commanding officer remarked in mock seriousness, "Is your quotation from a Greek or French translation?" Then added soberly, "It seems the natives and soldiers solve the question of raiment in different ways."

"How?"

"A careful glance will tell you, Pater."

The Colonel looked about him and, true enough, there were native servants robed in the lightest cotton cloth, with bare feet and turbans. Then again there were also some few native and English soldiers in padded cotton uniforms. Captain Wheeling smiled, when his co-traveler remarked, earnestly, "Lad, I would prefer the padded kind if we were to be upset into any of the numerous beds of cacti along the roadway."

"I agree with you, Colonel. My, this has certainly been a 'red letter day,' Pater. Just think, tonight I can jot down in my diary three heads, namely:

"First—Deserted Palace, Ambler.

"Second—First elephant ride.

"Third—New Jeypore Palace and interview with Maharajah."

Colonel Silveston laughed when his companion added, "Joys supernal will crown this day, if we are only fortunate enough to catch a glimpse of one of those sylph-like figures with adorable eyes."

"Time is the nurse and breeder of all good, lad. Laugh and be merry, we will soon be in Bombay where other witching eyes will help you to banish all regrets." Then with half a sigh he mournfully added, "In my loneliness, adopted son, by day, work, the

panacea of all ills, must be my companion and I trust Father Somnus may be friend enough to send his blessing each night. Ah! Labor and refreshing rest. What more should any man want, eh, lad?"

"As a moralist your views may be very estimable, Colonel, but I sincerely hope Father Jupiter may crown your future life with a few other blessings besides work and sleep." Then with boyish shyness he added, "Even witching eyes will never cause me to forget this happy furlough or the new Colonel of Bombay."

CHAPTER III

A "HONEY-CHILE" AND A COLONEL

WHILE the "Master Showman" and his "merry clown" were leisurely journeying across the Indian Empire, a party of three, from America, were on the briny deep wending their way toward the same country, and as the "Great Indus" prodded her way thither, the steamer stopped at various seaport towns, sometimes to land passengers only and at other places an opportunity was given to the interested sightseers to make a break in the long journey by spending a day or a few hours on land.

One morning before Doctor da Spaniola's party had arrived at Liverpool, where they changed steamers, one popular young miss inquired of the captain when meeting him near his own comfy quarters, "Well met, gallant sea rover. Is there really anything mysterious about that young lady over yonder?"

"Mysterious, Miss Nellie, what do you mean?"

"I hope you will not think me rude nor prying, Captain, but I overheard a gentleman tell a party that he had witnessed a strange scene on the wharf when they left New York and that there must be something uncanny about them."

"I trust no such uncanniness may ever enter that gentleman's life or your own either, Miss Nellie."

"I could not believe there was anything wrong—

her lovely face haunts me at night. Cannot you do something to cheer them, Captain?"

With grave countenance the captain answered, sadly, "A higher power than mine is needed, Miss Nellie, and I sincerely hope that you may never have to pass through such heart-breaking trials as that sweet young lady." The fair questioner was truly awed by the captain's voice and manner and remained silently beside him until he further spoke. "Miss Nellie, that gentleman over yonder is a celebrated surgeon from Virginia, who is taking a sea-voyage for his health, and his daughter within a year has lost her mother, two brothers and a beautiful plantation home on which she was reared. The fine old mansion was razed to the ground in the late war and the slaves scattered."

"How terrible!" gasped the listener.

"Yes, most sad indeed. Miss da Spaniola's mother was a beautiful, charming woman and her father's home the scene of many elegant social functions in those ante-bellum days, for the grandfather of that sad young lady was at that time a very wealthy planter."

Nellie brushed a tear away and said feelingly, "No wonder they desire quiet. No one shall intrude upon them if I can help it. Thank you for confiding in me. Oh! Captain, why must we have so many heart-aches when the old world is so very beautiful?"

"That question I cannot answer, Miss Nellie, unless such trials fit us to enter the better country. Hark! I hear a manly tread. Smile, child, or he may challenge me. Ah! that is better." Smiling

mischievously he added, "You know I am too old to survive a duel." The captain soon walked the bridge alone, and later, when his little favorite joined her mother, when slipping into a nearby steamer-chair she gave her mother a loving pat and kiss, her father laughed and in jest inquired, "What does my lady want now?"

With an affectionate glance toward her mother she answered earnestly, "Nothing this time, father. I am only glad mother is with us."

"Amen, darling, I will join you in those sentiments."

In yonder secluded nook another speaker gazed most intently into the face of her old colored nurse, saying, "Are you sure you are not sorry you have come, Aunt Ruthie? Just think of the wages you might be making now. Do you realize that you are free? Yes! free to go where you please without any cruel master to trouble you."

"Laws, honey, I's done guess yo' fergits I wuz borned on de ole plantashun. Clar ter goodness! hain't I's a bressin' de Lawd ebry marnin' dat no shiny angel is a pushin' me 'way f'om dis bressed fambly"—stretching out her hand she added pleadingly, "Wid yo' I's free, honey; yo' nebber sen' yo' ole nurse away." With misty eyes Miss da Spaniola grasped the black hand and answered, "Mammy, don't cry, you shall never leave me while I have a crust to divide with you. It was my duty to make you realize your privileges, but I, too, will thank God you are willing to stay."

"Willin', honey," sniffed the old auntie, "dat's

nuffin' ter do wid hit; me old marsa gib me his preshus chile ter kar fer atar me own wuz borned dead. Honey, whar yo' is I's free. Yass, suah, 'till I's gwine ter me heabenly home."

Hearing a manly tread the old auntie rose and walked over to another chair somewhat apart. Dr. da Spaniola took possession of a nearby chair and when his daughter narrated the substance of the little talk, he remarked kindly, "We could ill spare mammy now and I appreciate her willingness to accompany us on this journey, knowing her dread of the water." Before opening a book the speaker took a long breath and further remarked, "Oh! Patricia, child, it has been worth while; this glorious air makes me feel like another man. Dear old Doc. was right." With an affectionate glance he added, "And you are looking much better too, darling." Tears came unbidden into the lovely Southerner's eyes when he further spoke so tenderly, "I must take extra care of my one ewe lamb and our precious black sheep."

That evening when seated in his usual cozy nook, suddenly a rustling sound was heard. Dr. da Spaniola rose hastily to ascertain the cause of the commotion and on his return said, peremptorily, "Come, dear, a full-rigged vessel is merging out of the shadow of a heavy black cloud into the silvery pathway of the gods." Aunt Ruthie followed at respectful distance. Silently the little party watched the progress of the ship until Patricia remarked sadly, "Oh! Look, another dark cloud has engulfed it, father. See! A shadow is already falling aslant the vessel's bow now."

The speaker nestled closer to her father, the mute

appeal touched the Doctor and he answered tenderly, "Look over yonder, darling, the outer edge of that blackness has a fringe of silver light. Remember, child, there will always be some tiny ray to guide us if we trust. God's children are never allowed to grope in darkness. We must not be cowards, dear, for blessed are those who sow beside all waters."

"Pa, do you think mother and the boys can see us sometimes?"

Aunt Ruthie curtsied and half whispered, "Five bells, marsa." Suddenly lifting her tear-dimmed eyes the surgeon's daughter happened to catch the glance of a passing maiden, and was surprised her eyes should express such kindness and sympathy. Returning to their cozy nook mammy's mistress remarked, "Gather the rugs, mammy, your master is going to escort us down below to the lower regions." Then she added more brightly, "Have a lancet ready, pa, if Cerberus attacks us."

"Have no fears, the three Graces will protect us;" then he added wearily, "Let us hasten, daughter, I believe the glorious sea air will give me a good night's rest."

"I certainly hope so, pa; it will be a boon indeed after the wakeful ones you have had the last two years."

The next evening the captain walked bravely into a regular den of smoke and caught the words, "He was the very impersonation of hatred." Smiling in his genial way, he said courteously, "Not your Captain, I hope?"

Laughing, the speaker answered, "We would not

dare the one who has the custody of our lives in his keeping." Then added soberly, "We were only speaking of a little scene which took place the day we left New York."

Thanks to Miss Nellie, the captain had been apprised of the scene, so in his frank way said, "It is beyond my finite power to explain any mysteries, but if you lend me your ears a moment, I think I can show you that Dr. da Spaniola and his party are deserving of our sympathy and the privilege also of going and coming among us unmolested."

The captain's kindly words bore fruit. When the passengers learned the sad story they neither by word nor look disturbed the privacy of the little party beside the captain's cabin.

Two days before landing in Bombay, Aunt Ruthie exclaimed, "I clar, honey, dat corally sho' may be buful. Laws, yass; but, chile, dis heah sun am powerful frizzlin', so hit am." Patricia laughed when their black sheep added, nodding her head to lend emphasis to her words, "All de bad 'll suah be drawed out of yo' ole nurse ef she stays heah long. Laws me, Missis, w'at yo' t'ink ef yo' nursie gits ristercratical an' sleeps most de day."

Aunt Ruthie laughed heartily when her honey-child answered, "I would be powerless to prevent you, mammy; you are free, you know!"

The old auntie rose and walked into her communicating stateroom, muttering, good-naturedly, "I clar w'en me honey-chile git talkin' dat-a-way hit's time fer her ole nursie ter skeedo." It was her mistress' turn to laugh when the speaker added, "I

clar, ef dis t'ing happens any mo' dis pussun gwine ter tell Marsa Doctah his darter am actin' scand'lous." Aunt Ruthie thought she scored a signal victory over Mr. Shocking Teary Man when she heard her young mistress laugh at her quaint speeches those sad days.

At last the "Great Indus" landed her passengers at Bombay and the long journey from America was ended. The following Sunday morning two large bills were laid upon the plate, which the donors knew would assist Dr. Roland when administering to many sad and needy ones. In that little English mission loyal hearts were striving to accomplish something in the name of the Great Ruler of Nations for the betterment of her own benighted ones in India.

Aunt Ruthie's party were not seeking for a merry round of gayety at the hotel. Ah, no, only those who have been far away from their native heath can fully appreciate the pleasure the Americans found in the society of their kind friends at the mission house, especially so when surrounded daily by jabbering heathen and not a few poor, deluded creatures who are unsightly enough to make those not inured to such sights positively shudder.

Patricia da Spaniola became an eye-witness of the suffering and despair of a few of the countless millions of Indian women and child-widows before she had been many weeks in Bombay. Ah, a deep thankfulness entered her own sad heart that it had been her portion to be born in the "country of the stars and stripes" and implanted a longing that she,

too, might do what she could even though not a "hero in the strife." Yet the surgeon's daughter had only to come in close touch with Mrs. Roland to understand the full meaning of the words:

"We can fill a lifetime with kindly acts and true" because "There is always noble service for noble souls to do."

The English missionary found a true helpmeet when he married the daughter of Rev. Nathan Dunboro, of the Established Church of England. As a hostess Mrs. Roland was most gracious and in other ways was eminently fitted to assist her husband, having robust health, a sympathetic nature and tactful ways. Hand in hand they labored, hoping that at the end of life's journey they might be accounted faithful stewards of the work entrusted to their care.

A week after they landed on Indian soil, Aunt Ruthie found her charge huddled up in a heap on the couch, her frame shook convulsively as she tried to smother her sobs. The old auntie dropped "Marsa Doctah's" suit carelessly on a chair and kneeling beside the weeping girl said coaxingly, "Bressed lambkin, doan't cry, yo' fadder 'll heah yo'. Laws! chile, hain't marsa trubbl' nuff, honey?"

Lifting her head the speaker's lips trembled when she spoke, "I do try—not—to worry—father—" wiping the onrushing tears she added, "but somehow this morning——"

"Thar now, chile, you' mammy knows, doan't cry no more. Dar now, honey, lean on yo' ole nussie; she knows hit am hard, so she do."

Did Patricia da Spaniola quibble over the fact that her old nurse's skin was not the same shade as her own. Ah, no! in her sorrow and loneliness she was grateful that she could find comfort through one who had also suffered and had tested in the furnace of affliction the healing efficacy of the marvelous "Love Divine."

The little stowaway walked restlessly up and down the apartment and muttered, crossly, "Mother or no mother, I can't stand this much longer." Therefore he was rejoiced at that moment to hear a cheery voice call, "May I come in?" Aunt Ruthie grinned also as she rose to open the door. Annabelle Crasy truly seemed a veritable burst of sunshine when she spoke in her sweet cordial way, "Good morning everybody. I just had to brave the heat this morning to banish a fit of blues. Come, Patricia, the hack is at the door." Turning she added, "Please hurry, Aunt Ruthie, I have come to kidnap you both and carry you over to the shops."

The old auntie needed not a second bidding; she was delighted with the project and cheerfully chaperoned the party until luncheon time.

Aunt Ruthie counted it a god-send that her honey-child became so interested in the simple preparations for her friend's wedding, even though another short sea trip would prevent her from meeting Miss Crasy's fiancé or hearing Dr. Roland read the time-honored service in the little mission chapel.

The bride was quite overwhelmed with joyous surprise on her wedding morn when Mrs. Roland handed her an envelope wherein were enclosed a

check and the heartfelt congratulations of her new American friends. "Patricia asked what you would like for a wedding gift, dear; not knowing the needs of your new home I suggested the check."

Annabelle nearly crushed her simple white gown when she hugged the speaker and answered affectionately, "You could not have thought of anything else I would be more happy to receive." A touch of pathos entered the English girl's voice when she added, "How can I ever thank you for all your motherly kindness."

Mrs. Roland was really afraid of Mr. Tearyman that morning and answered, coaxingly, "Come, hurry, child, Captain Wheeling may run away if you are not on time." The officer named did not desert his post. Service over, the "bride" in a bantering tone remarked, "Command my husband to be on his guard, Colonel Silveston. My sweet friend and her father have given me a deadly weapon. I will keep the precious check in the Parsee's bank and when I wish to crush my husband I will draw it out and fly to England; it would carry me part of the way."

Mrs. Wheeling laughed when the officer answered soberly, "I am sure your friend would not have bestowed such a generous gift had she been acquainted with your deadly purpose."

"Indeed she would, she is a regular little 'rebel.'" Merry twinkles were dancing in the Colonel's eyes when he laid his hand upon the shoulder of the groom and said, "Perhaps 'going down the line in such swagger style' was not the best thing for your

future happiness. We should have arrived in Bombay earlier."

"I wish you had, Colonel, for Patricia is the most attractive little rebel you ever did see."

The Colonel smiled when the groom remarked jestingly, "Did she have a sylph-like figure and adorable eyes?"

"She was so adorable that I am glad she disappeared before you arrived." Turning to Colonel Silveston she added saucily, "My rebel will highly approve of my keeping my husband in subjection as long as I can." The speaker, too, looked bewitching, then further said, "American women do not call their husbands 'master' nor tremble at their approach."

Laughing, Colonel Silveston said, "This goddess of wisdom must not outwit you. Gad! I must find a weapon to parry her attacks."

"What weapon, Sir Colonel?"

"The shield of love, Mrs. Wheeling; it is quite irresistible."

"Beware, Sir Colonel, in giving to another you leave yourself unprotected."

"No danger, fair Minerva, I am too old."

Laughing, Annabelle remarked, "I shall write my dear 'rebel' that you do not approve of carrying weapons."

"What treason is this you are concocting?"

"Nothing very serious, Dr. Roland, only that your American rebel has been contaminating your ward. You must keep a sharp lookout that her influence does not upset your ain' fireside," answered the groom.

"Yes, look out," echoed the Colonel.

The dear hostess approached, saying graciously, "You need not look out again. The hack is at the door." The speaker was surprised at the merriment her simple announcement caused.

The missionary and his wife had become quite attached to Annabelle Crasy, consequently they were delighted to receive a letter from the bride informing them of her safe arrival and they smiled when perusing the postscript they read, "Regards to Colonel Silveston and kindly inform him that the rebel's weapon is still safe."

A week after the arrival of these most welcome tidings Dr. da Spaniola's party returned to Bombay. Leaving the hotel after the sunset hour on the day of their arrival, they dropped in a few minutes to see their friends at the mission house. Mrs. Roland was resting after the day's duties and was delighted to see them. Later, on leaving the compound they were confronted by a tall soldierly looking individual, who stepped aside to allow them to pass. To Patricia da Spaniola the meeting was merely an incident of no moment, but the lonely disheartened officer noted especially the lovely face as he caught a glimpse of it in the moonlight. Ah, if the surgeon's ears were attuned to the whirring sound of the little stowaway's arrows, he would have started, for one sped straight and true to the officer's heart.

"Bravo!" exclaimed Master Cupid, "now I will soon be on my homeward way. Oh! with what supernal joy shall I scale the heights of Mount Olympus."

Mrs. Roland rose to greet her other guest and said, regretfully, "I am sorry, Colonel, that you did not arrive sooner. Our new friends from America just left. You remember Annabelle speaking of them. I know you will like Dr. da Spaniola."

"Thank you, Mrs. Roland, I shall be glad to know him."

"I was just reading a lengthy account of Richmond Hospital in which he is interested. Yes, I am sorry you missed them."

"Perhaps I may be more fortunate another time, Mrs. Roland. Americans are always interesting, in fact, almost as much so as my own home folks."

"I do hope John Bull appreciates such loyalty, Colonel; but what I have learned since I have come in such close touch with Americans I find that they think the country of the 'stars and stripes' most glorious indeed."

The officer smiled in a rather indulgent way when he replied, "I will concede the fact that the flag is quite attractive, but——"

When the speaker hesitated a moment the dear hostess good-naturedly shook her head, smiling as she spoke, "Oh! you Englishmen—I see you are incorrigible, too——"

Dr. Roland's entrance prevented further discussion on the merits of the two countries and when the Colonel again passed the compound he muttered, "So that was the bride's adorable 'rebel.'" Mrs. Roland would have been highly amused could she have known that her latest guest's mind was engrossed more with "adorable eyes" than in the anticipated pleasure of meeting one of America's famous surgeons.

The following Sunday morning Dr. Roland greeted one of his worshippers most cordially saying, "Good morning, Colonel;" glancing toward the door he added, "Look, the rebels are approaching under the leadership of my good wife. If not proof against contamination, fly for your life through the vestry door."

"Retreat! Why, Doctor—what would Mother England think of such advice. Fancy! and from a most loyal subject too."

Smiling, the faithful missionary answered, "Well then, I must leave you to your fate. But remember, if the encounter prove disastrous, that I pointed out a way of escape."

Mother England had no need to feel ashamed of her loyal subjects. The genial Colonel acquitted himself most bravely and after pleasant interchange of greetings he escorted the "rebels" to their former quarters in the nearby hotel. Dr. da Spaniola was tall and distinguished looking and the erect soldierly form of the new Colonel would soon be a familiar figure throughout the city and suburbs. The beautiful sable-gowned young lady and her old colored mammy marching a few paces back of her honey-child attracted the attention of many of the motley throng. Colonel Silveston noticed the impertinent stare of a certain wealthy rajah, in consequence thereof, the following Tuesday afternoon when escorting the Americans over to Elephantine Caves he remarked earnestly, "You must corroborate my statement, Doctor, that India is not America;" adding soberly, "I really cannot answer for the consequences if your daughter is rash in going around unveiled without proper

protection. Many dastardly acts are performed here for which there is no redress whatever."

"Why, pa!" lifting her eyes she added pleadingly, "See, I am fully 'growed.' Who dares to say I am not able to take care of myself." The indulgent parent patted the speaker's hand and was amused when she further said, "I am most astonished, pa, that an English officer should abet cowardice."

"Darling, Colonel Silveston knows the ways of this country better than we do, therefore we must abide by his judgment while here."

Patricia's face expressed a mingling of love and trust, though she replied somewhat scornfully, "When under surveillance I am forced to obey." The doughty Colonel caught a glimpse of the fair speaker's eyes a second, when she further remarked, "If my life becomes unbearable I will take the next steamer back to dear old America."

"Woe is me! Why did you not warn me, Doctor. I see your daughter will never forgive me for curtailing her freedom."

Smiling genially, Patricia's father answered, "Do not despair, Colonel, time alleviates most of our sorrows."

"The 'rebel' could not help showing a few merry twinkles in her eyes when their courteous escort remarked joyously, "Precious hope—shake hands, Doctor, henceforth we are friends."

"Do not be too sure," spoke a merry voice, then added emphatically, "Dr. da Spaniola is under the abject influence of a staunch American 'rebel.'"

Thus challenged Colonel Silveston answered soberly,

"I am a desperate fighter, too, Miss da Spaniola, so beware." Rising, he further said, commandingly, "We land in a few moments, Doctor, please follow me." Despite the 'rebel's' fight for independence she accepted graciously the safe conduct of her stalwart protectors when mounting the rocky steps to the cave.

This trip was the first of a series of excursions on land and water under the escort of the Colonel or his company of volunteers. The day they visited the Government House at Malabar Point the Americans were cordially received by the Governor and several members of his staff. Yes, during their three months' stay in Bombay many invitations found their way to Doctor da Spaniola's apartments in the hotel, even though Aunt Ruthie's "bressed fambly" forwarded their regrets for all formal ceremonial functions, nevertheless the old Southern mammy was highly elated that such honors should be accorded her old master's granddaughter in a foreign land. The Governor was quite delighted that his prediction was really coming true and heartily congratulated the new Colonel when he informed him that by a masterly *coup de grace* he had managed to capture the heart of the old planter's granddaughter and had also induced her father and their "black sheep" to remain with his fiancée in India. It was no herculean task as far as Doctor da Spaniola was concerned, for aside from his interests in the Richmond Hospital, there was nothing but the saddest associations to bind him to the halls of his ancestors.

Captain Wheeling sent his congratulations worded

in his own peculiar style of mirth and adoration. The surgeon's daughter locked the letters away among her keepsakes, and was thankful that God had privileged her to meet and be loved by such a brave officer and Christian gentleman. Mrs. Wheeling's epistle caused much amusement when she discoursed upon the dangerous power of "witching eyes" and "weapons."

Three months again passed. Ah, during this time, like Annabelle, Patricia found an especial interest in the fine shops. One afternoon when glancing over some purchases she said, "Mammy, do you think mother would like these——"

"Sakes alive, chile, suah she would."

Resting her head against her old nurse she said, chokingly, "Oh, if she were only here. I miss her so."

Taking her charge in motherly embrace she said, tenderly, "Yo' break yo' ole mammy's heart, chile, ef yo' cries dat-away. Laws, yo' anxify Marsa Doctah if yo' gits sick. Hushaby—honey, hain't de Lawd sen' de Kulnel?"

"Yes, mammy," the speaker tried to brush away the onrushing tears and spoke falteringly, "I am thankful—for Reginald—but—mother always seemed to understand just what I——"

"Hark! Fo' de lan' sake! dry yo' eyes. I clar, hit sounds like me Marsa Doctah."

Marsa Doctor being accompanied by the Colonel, the old auntie rose at once, gathered up the several parcels and left the apartment. Doctor da Spaniola kissed the tear-stained face, saying tenderly, "Doctor

Roland has sent for me, dear." Glancing at his guest, he added smiling, "Sorry, Colonel, but fate wills that I must leave you to the tender mercies of my daughter. Pray excuse me." Then he, too, followed Aunt Ruthie's example and left the attractive sitting-room. The young hostess rose from the divan and tried to smile when the gentlemen entered the room, but not before the Colonel had noted the sad tableau and inwardly blest the old auntie for trying to comfort his darling. Quickly the Colonel rushed to his fiancée's side and holding the sweet "rebel" in close embrace said smiling, "Poor child! Everyone has deserted you." Then he led his sweetheart to the cozy nook from which she had fled at his entrance. Patricia's tear-stained face awakened a deep pent-up love in Reginald Silveston's life and a desire also that he might flood the grief-stricken young life with a great happiness. Later, while watching the loved face as Patricia nestled in his arms, contented and comforted, he said, "Last night I read of another beautiful love dream of long ago." Then he added reverently, "God has given me another beautiful Rebecca to comfort me."

A holy light illumined Patricia's eyes as she raised her head to kiss her lover, then withdrawing from his embrace she added mischievously, "Please do not place me upon a pedestal until after we are married, or great might be the fall thereof."

The Colonel again captured the saucy "rebel" and said, laughing, "You do not frighten me a bit, darling, but, listen! I have a surprise for you. I have received an appointment to serve on the staff of the Governor."

The speaker smiled when his fiancée remarked soberly, "I am afraid I am the one to be frightened now. Oh! think of the responsibility of marrying such a noted gentleman. Perhaps you are making a mistake—" The Colonel gently rested his hand over the speaker's mouth and said, "I hope that I never make a more serious mistake," then added anxiously, "You will not regret our leaving the city for Malabar Point, will you, dear?" The Colonel's face indeed looked joyously radiant when his lovely fiancée raised her head to meet her lover's gaze and said tenderly, "Regret anything when I have you—do you think——?"

Stooping to kiss away all further words, the Colonel answered hastily, "I think nothing, darling, but that I am the most fortunate man alive."

The Colonel broke the silence later to say, as he delved down in his pocket, "My! Patricia, I almost forgot—" then further remarked as he brought forth a small packet, "Open the case, dear, I want to show you one of my boyish sweethearts."

The lovely Southerner did as commanded and after the first glimpse exclaimed excitedly, "How lovely—Oh! who is she?"

The Colonel looked quite grave and a touch of pathos slipped into his voice when he quietly answered, "My mother."

An overwhelming sense of coming responsibility, as a wife and comforter, seemed suddenly to overpower Patricia as she gazed at the miniature. Lifting her face near her lover's as one arm stole around his neck, she said in an awed whisper, "Mother

was good and beautiful, too, Reginald. Do you think they know that we have found each other so far away from home?"

"The Bible speaks of ministering angels, darling." Then he added in hushed tones, "They may be nearer to us than we think. Who knows?"

"Yes, who knows," answered the surgeon's daughter as she partially withdrew from her lover's embrace and with eyes still riveted on the costly miniature remarked, solemnly, "Do you think your mother would approve of your choice? I am not a royal princess."

The Colonel laughed quite heartily, then remarked, still smiling, "Forgive me for laughing, darling, but you amuse me so. A royal princess, indeed! why! Patricia, kings are not seeking for poor younger sons for their daughters." Then he added tenderly as he drew the troubled Martha into the shelter of his arms, "Rest content, sweetheart, if mother knows all and can see you, she will have no regrets and will love you for having courage to marry an exile and crusty old misanthrope like myself."

Patricia smiled and said demurely, "Misanthrope," then further remarked with a saucy toss of her head, "If the Colonists had not shown such powers of endurance, I admit, I might have a few misgivings in placing myself in the clutches of——"

The Colonel, laughing, said hastily, "No, darling, say not oppressor." Then delving into his pockets again he remarked, joyously, "With these handcuffs I bind you to me as long as life shall last."

Patricia's eyes sparkled with pleasure when her

lover said tenderly, as he placed the bracelets upon her arm, "Treasure them, darling, they were mother's. I just received this packet of keepsakes this morning." His grave face lighted up in a boyish happy way when the Colonel further remarked, "Prisoners must be kept submissive, consequently I did not dare to bring you anything more today."

The lover was amused when his sweetheart remarked quite soberly, "It is fortunate that you understand before our marriage that 'rebels' are hard to manage."

Thus, the hours sped hastily by with their touches of joy and sadness—until, at length, the surgeon's daughter, like her friend Annabelle, was married in the little mission chapel. Mrs. Roland kissed the bride in a sweet motherly way after the service was over, then turning, said, with merry twinkles dancing in her beautiful brown eyes, "Colonel, what is your opinion of America now?"

The bridegroom bestowed an ardent glance upon his lovely bride and answered, "Please do not ask me to confess, John Bull might be seriously offended."

Congratulations and good-byes were quickly said and the new family of four were driven at a brisk rate of speed to their bungalow home at Malabar Point.

The Colonel was surprised when passing through the gates to find his own company of volunteers and other soldiers from the fortifications in the city, lined up on either side of the driveway which led to the Government House. As they neared their destination the band struck up an old Southern

melody in honor of the bride. Aunt Ruthie caused her new master to smile when she quaintly said with beaming countenance, "Clar ter goodness, honey, hain't dat fine! Laws, hit most mak' me feel lik' shoutin' Hallelujah."

The Colonel's wife tried to convey her thanks by smiling sweetly when the old auntie grasped her hand when she rose and remarked with a little choke in her voice, "De Lawd bress yo' in yo' new home, honey." Doctor da Spaniola muttered, "Amen"—while the Colonel, too, smiled at the old auntie and said, "Am I not to be included in that blessing, Aunt Ruthie?"

Patricia's mammy gave a low chuckle and said as she curtsied, "Laws, 'cuse me, marsa, but I's hab ter ax me honey-chile fustest afore I kin sez—"

Aunt Ruthie was amazed, when she turned, to notice that her honey-child had left her side and had before even the gentlemen were aware of her intentions, walked quickly toward the bandmaster, who bowed low when she addressed him saying, "In my country's name I thank you for this courtesy," then turning to Captain Hexham said, "My husband and I will not forget your kindly welcome."

The Colonel advanced to lead his bride into the Government House, but before passing through lines of bowed servants he also expressed his appreciation in a few fitting words. At a sign from the leader the music ceased and the players broke out in wild cheers, in which the soldiers along the line participated. The wedding party loitered on the veranda until the band, playing the national anthem,

led the volunteers through the grounds to the barracks. Flowers and fountains nodded a welcome as the Colonel led his bride under the covered way to Tiger Hall. When at last they entered the library of their new home, the bride said as she linked her arm in her husband's, "Are you sure, Reginald, that you did not arrange this surprise?"

Doctor da Spaniola's heart sang a pæan of praise when he noted the look of deep affection and loving manner when he said, "Really, dear, I knew nothing whatever about it."

The Colonel laughed happily, when his wife pretended to whisper in her father's ear as he stooped over to kiss her and said, "Did you hear the soldiers cheering my Colonel? My, pa, didn't you feel proud?"

"I will not listen to such rank heresy, father, they were cheering my wife and I was more than proud of you, darling."

Both gentlemen smiled when the bride made a low courtesy in the direction of the Colonel and said in saucy merriment, "Thank you, master."

"Come, Patricia, stop jesting, dinner will be announced before you are ready. Hurry, dear, Aunt Ruthie is waiting."

In most doleful tones the bride answered, "All right, pa. What a time I shall have obeying two masters."

Laughing, the surgeon sought his own quarters, while the bridegroom clasped his wife in his arms a moment saying, "Much you will know about masters." Then leading her toward an open door

remarked, "I guess we will be the ones to do the obeying. Hurry, dear, or I will be jealous of Aunt Ruthie."

The happy couple received a solid silver service from the Governor and his staff. Lord Silveston was duly notified of the date of the coming nuptials and the Colonel was quite pleased with the letters of congratulations and kindly wishes. His lordship, in speaking of his gift to the bride, said, "Kindly accept check, as I am not sufficiently acquainted with the needs of your present environment to decide what other gift would be more acceptable."

The lovely Southerner wrote courteous letters of thanks and appreciation to the several donors of her various gifts. One found its way to where Adjutant Wheeling and his wife were stationed, and when another arrived at the old manor house there was much speculation about Reginald's Indian wife, which did not in the least interest his lordship, so he rather curtly remarked, "This letter was written by a lady, be she an American savage or a heathen Hottentot. If you are so curious, wife, why not write for her picture."

My lady shrugged her lovely shoulders and answered, "Your mother might have been interested enough to crave that favor, but I shall be content if Reginald only keeps his Hottentot in India."

Lord Silveston was a quiet, peace-loving gentleman, so leaning over to kiss his wife's forehead he said affectionately, "I am not interested in her looks either." Then glancing toward his son and heir, he further remarked, "My own lovely Hottentot is enough for me to manage."

Smiles drove away all puckers from her ladyship's brow and she said sweetly, "I know Hottentots are very fond of decking themselves. I am glad you sent those jewels."

"I am glad, too, dear. Reginald was a good boy, I for one will not begrudge him anything that will make his life in exile more bearable."

Lord and Lady Silveston were highly amused when the young heir said in tones that inferred he deemed the discussion highly puerile, "Pshaw! it's likely Hottentots are allowed to live at the Government House."

Laughing, Lord Silveston rose, saying as he stooped to kiss his wife, "The verdict has been pronounced, dear, and the case closed." Then added as he walked toward the doorway, "Come to my study, son, I need your advice about another perplexing problem."

Lady Silveston would have thought the heathen Hottentot truly worthy to be decked with jewels could she have seen the bride in all her girlish loveliness when she again entered the library where both gentlemen, in evening attire, awaited her coming. It was quite dark when Colonel Silveston and Dr. da Spaniola followed the bride out on the veranda; the "Queen of Night" was shortly expected and when she arrived the little party hailed her advent with delight, despite the fact that the natives hold certain superstitious beliefs concerning her power to harm one.

The Colonel spoke of several incidents of his late journey across the empire, then remarked, "Only

a few years ago, dear, this very point was a jungle and the lair of wild beasts."

Doctor da Spaniola removed his pipe to laugh, when his daughter leaned toward him, saying, as she clung to his arm, "I am so glad you are here to protect me. Perhaps you make a mistake to allow me to come to such a terrible place."

"Come, Patricia, no nonsense. Go on, Colonel, I am deeply interested."

The Colonel's smile expressed loyalty and good will when he answered, "Pardon me, Doctor, but I cannot allow my wife to be scolded." Then leaning over he drew his wife back in her chair, and as he held the captured hand in his own, as it willingly rested on the arm of her chair, a look of perfect content stole over his face, when he said, "Excuse me for keeping you waiting, Father Doctor; but really fair Eve, as usual, is at fault again."

The lovely bride snatched her hand away, saying in bantering tone, "You forget poison is ever at hand that leaves no trace. Be careful! I am now in the 'Land of the Thugs.'" Then lifting her eyes toward her ever indulgent parent, demurely added, "Reginald, dear, we must not be rude to our guest." Doctor da Spaniola laughed when his daughter drew herself up and proudly added, "America will not allow her noted surgeons to be neglected. Proceed with the narrative, sir, or I will not answer for the consequences."

"I wish, dear, that it may always be as easy to grant your requests." Then he added, "Do not be troubled about yonder surgeon for I am forced to

treat him well or he might seek revenge and elope to America with a certain saucy bit of baggage."

Patricia held up her hand warningly, and said, as she laughed in merry glee, "America never allows bad names either—so beware!"

"Doctor, I find her incorrigible. I am glad you are here too—some day I may need your restraining influence."

The Colonel laughed when his wife said, appealingly, "Ah! pa—you will never go over to the enemy's camp, will you?" Being assured that her father would always remain loyal, the happy bride leaned back in her chair to watch certain silver rays illuminate the darkened waters and creep nearer and nearer. When they touched the nearby battery the Colonel remarked, "Doctor, those five guns jutting out into the Indian Ocean are Mother England's sentinels, and if you were to walk across the esplanade before our bungalow, you could see the waves sporting only a hundred feet below you." Then he added, "The Portuguese iconoclasts destroyed the Hindoo temple; some day we must visit the ruins and besides there are many curious inscriptions on the hill-side that might interest you."

"Thank you, son, I would be glad to see them."

The Colonel then turned and said anxiously, "Do you think, dear, that you will like living out here in the suburbs? It may seem very quiet after the bustle and noise of a large commercial city like Bombay."

There was a happy, holy light in the bride's eyes when she softly answered, "Reginald, dear, where

you and father are will ever be home to me, and besides I think this spot very beautiful indeed."

"Hark! dear, I hear the tramp of many feet, the Governor must have returned and is going to honor my wife." An outrunner in scarlet approached at that moment crying, "The Governor! The Governor!"

The little party had risen when his honorable highness appeared surrounded by a retinue of servants as a bodyguard. The sweet Southern lady was equal to the occasion and both gentlemen felt a certain pride in watching her. After the Governor departed, Doctor da Spaniola pleaded fatigue and retired to his apartments, to battle with several jabbering servants—thus the lovers were left alone on the porch to talk over, without further interruption, the beauties of the night and the various unexpected pleasures of their wedding day.

Auntie Ruthie had several pitched battles with the servants and did not hesitate to send them scampering either. The Colonel's wife had a kindly heart and many times during her early married life at Tiger Hall would show her appreciation of their willingness to serve her by a smile or gift. Aunt Ruthie sometimes shook her head and voiced her disapproval of such actions by exclaiming, "Clar ter goodness, honey, w'en yo acks dat-a-way,—dem jabberin' pussuns jes' gwine ter be mo' strepterus dan eber—suah, dey am—chile."

"Why, mammy, I did not know you could be so hard-hearted before. The Hindoo servants are able to earn only forty or sixty cents a day. They are patient, attentive and honest, you well know."

"Yass, honey, dey am—but, laws me, dair fergettery bump am putty quar—an' den de way dey allus wants sot down ter wurk, hain't cordin' ter 'Meriky's idees ob hustlin', dat's suah!"

"Maybe not, mammy, but they never quibble about lateness of hours or length of task. I think they are pretty good-natured, after all, even if they are so dependent upon directions for their daily duties."

The Colonel's wife left the apartment laughing, for Aunt Ruthie stood with arms akimbo facing her mistress, when she said in her quaint way, "Wal—den, honey—ter plaze yo' I'll swar dem pesky jabberin' sarvints are de lobeliest pussuns I eber seed. Ha, Ha, Ha! sakes alive!—chile—ef dey doan't skeer me ter death." Lifting her head she added proudly, "I feels likah Queen ob Shebah w'en dey bobs up with lighted lantern or umbrellah. I doan't t'ink 'Meriky eber be stylishus nuff for yo' mammy atar libin' heah in Indee——"

The dear ones were not forgotten, even though a great happiness had entered the life of Aunt Ruthie's honey-child. The Colonel, too, assisted his beloved wife to cheer and comfort the good surgeon. In due time letters and papers were received in which deep regret was expressed that Doctor da Spaniola was forced to sever his connections with the Richmond Hospital. Patricia noted that her father was deeply touched by the expressions of esteem and appreciation of his co-workers. Later, when the Colonel returned, Patricia ran out to meet him, saying with beaming countenance, "Come in, dear, read this letter; our guest has honor thrust upon him."

Later, the Colonel remarked smiling, "Your father is certainly to be congratulated, sweetheart." Patricia looked radiantly happy when her husband added, "Darling, my opinion of America, as mammy would say, 'hab riz.' Yes, I am thankful there are a few people in this selfish old world who do not wait for the King of Terrors to claim his prey before they send their appreciation and regard."

"I agree with you, Reginald. That reminds me of old Aunt Sue when I would walk down to her cabin with a basket of dainties she would exclaim, 'God bress yo', honey, a leetle lobe and flo'ers helps lik' de sunshine. Thankee—sakes alive! chile—what yo' knows 'bout sech sweeties w'en yo' ah deader? Laws, nuffin—yes' nuffin.'"

The Colonel laughed quite heartily when Doctor da Spaniola entered the library and said after a puzzled cursory glance around the apartment, "Why! I thought Aunt Ruthie was here."

"No, father, only old brack Sue."

"Since when have you been associating with such celestial company? Are you a spiritualist, Colonel?"

"I'm blameless, Father Surgeon. Imitating the example of my far-away ancestor, I tell you that my wife alone is responsible. Listen! she did impersonate and I did laugh." Then laying aside the bantering tone he added soberly as he rose and wrung the newcomer's hand, "I am real proud of my new father, let me congratulate you." Patricia laughed when her father smilingly answered, "Upon what, pray?—my good fortune in finding such a loving son?"

"Stop jesting, father. Come, have a game of chess. Patricia is tired." Before commencing the game he turned to his daughter and said, "Run along to mammy and rest a while."

"Beware! Sir Surgeon, if you send my mascot away, I will beat you."

The young wife laughed as she leaned over the back of her father's chair to whisper, "Uncle Sammy, please do not let John Bull have too easy a victory; he thinks he can do anything since one of Columbia's daughters so hopelessly surrendered."

"Come! begin, Sir Surgeon, I accept her ladyship's challenge—'tis war to the knife."

Later when America's representative bade the Colonel good night he remarked in jest, "Good night, son. I trust that whenever her ladyship starts a fight, it may always end like this game—a draw."

Patricia da Spaniola was justly proud of so honorable and talented a father and remarked to her husband the following day that even though his name would be stricken from the list of attending surgeons, yet as long as the hospital existed they never would expunge the name of da Spaniola from a certain bronze tablet, for by gifts as well as skilful, generous acts her father had indeed been a benefactor.

CHAPTER IV

A PRINCESS' HERO AND A CICERONE

AN English officer and his company of volunteers were in their saddles; their horses were trotting briskly, as they were wont to do when on their homeward stretch. Placing themselves in the ranks of trusty, intelligent animals they seemed to divine the fact that their masters also had no desire to grope their way in darkness and that they, too, had noted the fast disappearance of the great red ball of fire in the west. Miss Prudence might counsel haste, yet Colonel Silveston and his sturdy bodyguard were forced to halt when they issued from a lonely, densely wooded road, their way being impeded by a mob of bandits who were making a furious attack upon a few loyal retainers of some wealthy or princely house. A glance sufficed.

The new Colonel of Bombay grasped the situation and with ringing words of command rushed madly forward. At the sudden appearance of the "red-coats" the mob dispersed and with furious terrifying outcries fled in confusion toward the woods. The leader of the ladies' escort prostrated himself before his deliverer, thus to express his thanks. Realizing the serious consequences which might attend tardy action, Colonel Silveston curtly commanded in Indian dialect, "Rise! Make haste! It's late; they may

return with reinforcements. I will escort your party to the city."

The speaker's commands were instantly obeyed and after a few hurried words to his own brave company, the English officer again dashed madly forward with part of his volunteers to gain the head of the cavalcade, and thus protected, the ladies in the curtained carriage were hurried on toward the city, upon entering which, without more ado, the commanding officer lifted his helmet and turned into a side street to lead the way toward Malabar Point and the barracks.

It was no unusual occurrence to assist parties in distress, so the incident passed from the Colonel's mind. He did not speak of the encounter at home, fearing the family at Tiger Hall would be unduly anxious whenever he was called to ride afield. In consequence of his silence his wife was surprised when a deputation from Prince Marathin-athajah the following afternoon awaited the home-coming of the Colonel. The wonderful interview at last being over Patricia rushed eagerly forward to greet her husband, saying excitedly, "Hurry! Confess at once! Tell me what has happened!"

"Nothing much, dear; they are making a terrible fuss because I allowed a certain party to have the benefit of our escort back to the city last night. I did not fire a gun or get a single scratch and now the prince desires that I should name a reward. Bah."

"I suppose you suggested a tiara of diamonds for your wife."

Kissing the lovely face the happy husband

answered, "Not even for you could I accept a reward. Come! Tell me what you have been doing all day, that interests me more than an Indian princess' rescue."

Despite the fact that Colonel Silveston desired to call the incident closed, the spokesman of the party returned at the end of the week and presented the devoted spouse of Annabelle's "American rebel" with an award of merit in the form of a gold medal studded with gems. The recipient of the prince's generosity was showered with congratulations when he exhibited the costly medal to the occupants of Tiger Hall, and later closing the embossed velvet case he remarked jestingly, "Thus endeth the last chapter of an Indian princess' rescue." Then he added, affectionately, "Take it, sweetheart, and hide it away with mother's keepsakes."

With beaming face the surgeon's daughter answered, "My Colonel is a princess' hero." Both gentlemen laughed when she turned to a bronze image of Buddha and said solemnly, with hands extended, "For my new title, Prince Gautama, I will render to thee my life-long fealty."

Colonel Silveston captured the fleeing figure, who laughingly remarked, "Pray excuse me, gentlemen, the commands of a princess' hero must be obeyed 'hinstanter.'"

"A hero, bah! Come listen, dear, if I ever achieve renown, your father knows it will be because my life was crowned with two such sweet Christian women as you and mother. Am I not right, Marsa Doctah?"

Before her father replied Patricia kissed her hero, then hastening toward the doorway with her new treasure she remarked saucily, "Beware or you may mar your crown. Father knows, too, a conceited woman is an abomination."

Life at the Government House was a complete change for the sorrowing Southern beauty and her father. Aunt Ruthie easily accommodated herself to strange new conditions of her life; seemingly, being with her honey-child was happiness enough for her. The surgeon also held some such views, therefore was perfectly content to remain in India. A deep affection grew in his heart for his new son; he knew that he could be stern and masterful, if occasion merited it, but with his wife he was ever courteous and gentle.

Many months passed happily by. On the anniversary of his daughter's marriage he presented her with a handsome India shawl. That same morning the Colonel also entered his wife's room laughing and with the happy abandon of a school-boy remarked when leaning over the bed to kiss his sick wife, "Good morning, dear. My! we are becoming quite notorious."

Smiling happily Patricia answered jestingly, "Has my Colonel been rescuing any more princesses or forlorn damsels?"

The Colonel laughed—then said, pleadingly, "Listen! I want to read you something—ah, here it is, on the front page, too,—'Colonel and his charming American wife are receiving congratulations on the birth of a beautiful little daughter.'" Addressing

mammy he added, "Aunt Ruthie, American papers could not have better handled the subject."

The happy mother was amused at the expression on the old dusky face as she nodded her bright turbaned head and respectfully replied, "Suah, yo' knows, marsa, dat an ole brack mammy can't be sot up as jedge, but—sakes alive! gib 'Meriky a trial, den yo' sees dey hain't nappin'. I clar! Ha! Ha! yo' oughter knows dat, marsa."

"Oh! Aunt Ruthie, I never thought that you would retaliate or be so unmerciful to a fallen foe."

"Clar ter goodness, marsa, yo' ole nuss means nuffin' dis'specful, suah, no; but I wuz riz under dem bressed stars an' stripes." By way of adding emphasis she nodded her head knowingly, "Fo de lan sake! Mudder England oughter be monstrous sot up ober sech a chile as 'Meriky. Ha! Ha!—eben if she did git a liddle strepterus, sah."

Before the Colonel made reply her honey-child said, "I declare, mammy, I hope my daughter will never become as obstreperous as that."

There were merry twinkles in Aunt Ruthie's eyes and she gave a satisfied chuckle when she replied, "Nebber be afeerd, honey, my lambkin doan't hab ter drink any dat pesky tea—suah no! Laws, chile, doan't git any sech nonsensical idees in yo' head or yo' ole nuss might git strepterus too—honey." Then turning to walk toward the babe's blue and white nest, she said, "Leetle Missie oughter shet dem buful eye-peepers." The Colonel rose, as this was an oft-told tale and said as he again leaned over the bed to kiss the sweet invalid, "Darling, I suppose I must

obey orders. My! I had no idea that Aunt Ruthie could be such a tyrant. Try to sleep, too, dear. Good-bye."

Late that afternoon the Colonel rushed to his wife's room and excitedly exclaimed on entering the door, "Look, dear,—a package from the Princess! I wonder what it is?"

The costly circlet of diamonds seemed to deprive the good Colonel of the powers of speech until his wife in excited tones broke the spell saying, "Who is it for? Dear, did she not send any message?"

"Oh, yes! I forgot the note." The puzzled officer fumbled in his pockets and at last brought forth the missing epistle and while leisurely opening the envelope the invalid exclaimed, "Come hurry, Reginald, what does she say?"

"Only a few lines, Patricia. Listen! 'Congratulations. The enclosed ring for little daughter.'"

Mammy had the recipient of the beautiful gift in her arms when her mistress requested her to come and see the lovely ring. En route to the bedside the Colonel took the child from the old auntie and gently kissing her soft cheek, he remarked as he stood at the side of the bed, "Here is daddy's diamond. This sweet child is better than a thousand rings. You must lock the ring away with the medal, sweetheart; it is too valuable for this wee mite to use until old enough to appreciate it." Then laying the child carefully in his wife's arms, he fumbled in his coat pockets again and said as he handed a package to Aunt Ruthie, "By the way, darling, your old hubby passed Tajah's bazaar this morning and was tempted."

Taking the wrappings off, Aunt Ruthie handed her honey-child a gold snake bracelet set in rubies. The little mother's eyes expressed such pleasure and happiness that the donor of the gift leaned over to receive the kiss of thanks and tenderly said, "A wife above rubies and a child set in diamonds. My jewels are precious indeed."

"What is all this about jewels?"

"Oh! Come in, pa, we have a surprise for you; the Princess has remembered your grandchild." Then she added, smiling, "Look, you must scold my husband for being so extravagant. See my snake bracelet?"

Doctor da Spaniola took the hand extended toward him and as he gazed down into the sweet, flushed face he said, "I am afraid I cannot do that, Patricia, I must side this time with my son, for I also think the Colonel's jewels are worthy of their gifts."

"Please stop, pa." Then she added in awed tones, "Sometimes I am afraid of so much happiness."

Aunt Ruthie noticed a mistiness gathering in her honey-child's eyes, so coming to the rescue she curtly said, "Sakes alive! gemmen, I done ax yo' pardons, but laws me, ef yo' doan't wants me honey-chile ter hab a feber, dar bettah be no mo' sech 'citements. Come, honey, gib yo' ole nuss dat bressed chile hinstanter."

Aunt Ruthie's hints were regular broadsides which the gentlemen had to face with the best possible grace. The banished exiles later became quite interested in deciphering the signature inscribed on the tiny note, and after much speculation concluded

it to be "Mariatha Ronla Dijahamah," so it happened when Aunt Ruthie's new charge was about to be christened, the Colonel suggested Ronla in honor of the Princess and the surgeon, Virginia, in memory of the old home state, and as the happy little mother had no especial preference, Ronla Virginia Silveston it remained and was thus recorded at the little mission chapel. The young wife rebelled sometimes when Aunt Ruthie promulgated the fact that "hinstanter" the exiles must leave the precincts of the sick room, but later when able to be about again she harbored no feelings of ill-will toward her faithful nurse for using every precaution that she in the end might be strong and well.

Dr. and Mrs. Roland were rejoiced when the young mother was able to attend the services at the mission chapel and the sweet convalescent was deeply touched at the heartfelt offering of praise for her recovery. Ronla Virginia Silveston was christened in the same tiny chapel in which her parents were married; thus another link was forged in the chain of loving associations which bound the little family at Tiger Hall more closely to Dr. and Mrs. Roland and that tiny English mission. Aunt Ruthie lavished a wealth of affection upon the little babe, but did not allow her to entirely usurp her honey-child's place. The family were highly amused to hear such a wee infant addressed as Leetle Missie or Missie Ronlah.

Whether sparkling diamonds really possessed any mystical powers or not would never be known, but the Colonel's daughter certainly bewitched her grandfather. He would have granted her slightest

childish caprice or whim as the years rolled on had he been allowed to act so unwisely. Fortunately for Ronla Silveston the baneful influence of her loving, devoted grandparent was counterbalanced by the more wise training of her parents, who, though loving her too very dearly, yet thoughts of the future steeled their hearts to say no at times when they considered it best for the dear one so to act. Mrs. Silveston had to watch Aunt Ruthie also. One day when in the nursery she remarked, "Mammy, you never used to be so indulgent with me, you and father will completely spoil the child." The old auntie gave a low chuckle, then looking into her mistress' troubled face said, "Honey, hit's de signs ob ole age, an' laws me, I clar—we jes' can't help hit." Adding pleadingly, "Sakes alive! doan't yo' worries, honey—me bressed lambkin gwinter ter turn out all right—suah suttin she am." The good surgeon knew full well that Ronla's parents were acting wisely, consequently whenever a clashing of wills occurred and he was not able to withstand the tearful pleading look, he would hastily leave the room and lock himself in his own special den out of temptation's way. After the storm was over he would usually hear a tiny knock and a dear voice call, "Grandpa, please open the door, mother says I'm a good girl now." Before the old gentleman would allow her to enter, he called, "Are you sure, Ronla? I have heard this same story before." Patiently waiting and humbly answering all questions the door at last would be opened. One morning "Leetle Missie" rushed into the den and sighing heavily said, "Now for a story to comfort me, grandpa;

you think mamma is naughty to make me cry, don't you, grandpa?" The good surgeon tried to push the child off his lap and answered, soberly, "Go to your nurse. I cannot have any little girl here who does not love Aunt Ruthie's honey-child. Only bad, wicked children do not love their mothers." Ronla clung to the speaker's hand, saying tearfully, "I do love mother, grandpa, but only mamma gets on my nerves sometimes and it is so upsetting." Nestling closely in Doctor da Spaniola's arms she remarked inquiringly, "Didn't you get tired of hearing all the time that children must obey, when you were little, grandpa?" The person addressed, too, found such scenes upsetting, but tried to answer wisely, well knowing that disobedient children are never a joy to themselves nor anybody else. The surgeon gently remarked after the comforting story was ended, saying tenderly, "Ronla dear, whose picture is that hanging over my desk?"

"The Christ Child, grandpa."

Kissing the sweet upturned face he said kindly, "Well then, darling, remember, He obeyed His parents when a child. Mind, then, for His sake." After a pause he added, affectionately, "Kiss me and run along to your dolls, grandpa has a letter to write."

Several mornings after this little incident occurred the Colonel read aloud an article in one of the morning papers of a certain young Hindoo who was to be tried that very day for killing a service-man. The servant had retired to his own domain. Loitering at the table the sweet mistress remarked, soberly, "Do you think that boy would be breaking his parents' hearts, pa,

if they had hedged him in from his babyhood days with honesty and right living?"

"Whether his parents set him a good example or not, nor of his early surroundings, we shall never know; nevertheless, the crime committed shows that self-control was lacking in his training. Ah, daughter, even in civilized America I am afraid there are many careless, pleasure-loving parents who live for self-gratification alone without a single thought for the eternal or future well-being of their offspring."

Colonel Silveston was amused when his wife demurely replied, "Sir Surgeon, you argue well, but what happens when Princess Ronla whines and cries 'Can't I have it, grandpa?'"

Laughingly he answered, "I surrender, fair Minerva; does not your old father run like a coward and give you a fair field?" Banishing mirthful jest the skilful surgeon further remarked, gravely, "You are right, dear, in my dotage I am rather inclined to sow to the wind and like many another foolish parent, would be just as amazed if I reaped the whirlwind of sorrow and disappointment."

There was a deep holy look in Patricia's eyes that strangely touched her husband and father when she said, tenderly, "Poor heathen lad, how different his life might have been if when a small innocent boy some one had taught him to search for the 'Pearl of Great Price'!"

"Sad, indeed, daughter; but heathen India is not the only place on the globe where careless parents do not realize their privileges until the years are lost and gone."

"Father, I never realized until yesterday that such careless civilized people could learn a few lessons from darkened heathenism."

"How so, child?"

"Why, I read only the other day that a Japanese Shinto mother takes her babe at a very tender age and places him under the protection of some special, chosen god."

Colonel Silveston had been an interested listener, though ostensibly immersed in the morning news; hence the surgeon was surprised when a voice remarked, "Father, I remember dear mother saying that a careful, diligent sowing before the age of three rarely failed to garner a rich harvest of joy for both parents and little ones; besides, on shipboard, wife, I met a Jesuit priest who remarked, 'Give me the first seven years of a child's life and you Protestants may have the rest.'"

The youthful hostess rose hastily and before her father could follow her example she leaned over the back of his chair and imprinted on his forehead what he in jest called "a zephyr kiss," and with lovely eyes surcharged with merriment remarked softly, "Remember, dear grandpa, Ronla is not seven yet, so beware!" The Colonel's wife gave a merry, happy laugh when her husband reached out his arm to retard her progress, saying, "When dispensing those sweet, fluffy, white dainties never forget your old hubby."

"Ho! Fair enchantress, who has to beware now? Conciliate that green-eyed monster immediately or there will be trouble."

The young wife laughed at the idea, knowing so

well that there was not the slightest feeling of jealousy between her good husband and her father, in truth, a mutual love for her bound them together, while in her own heart there was a separate niche for each of her loved ones, nor in any way did they conflict.

The kindly surgeon had no desire to usurp the rights of any member of the family, still less the Colonel's, who had brought such happiness into the clouded life of his dearly loved child. Yes, no one disputed the fact that Doctor da Spaniola truly gained a son when his daughter married Reginald Silveston. On the other hand, when stern duty caused Patricia's husband to ride afield, he was thankful that his loved ones were not left unprotected, especially when surrounded by a people of an unknown tongue. The doctor, too, realized that their present environment was less safe than if in either England or America. The surgeon had acquiesced most willingly to his daughter's request to remain in India; nevertheless, most naturally, he never failed to feel a keen interest in Richmond Hospital, where he had labored so many years. Any man who had led such an active life as Doctor da Spaniola could never be satisfied with idleness, so in the work of the mission Dr. Roland found him to be a most able coadjutor, and it was the earnest wish of the busy missionary that sometime he would have a more fitting home for dispensary and hospital than the little front room of the Mission House. Still, despite this handicap the brave hearts worked on. The fame of many successful operations at the mission and other parts of the city helped to make the little English mission an added power in

the uplift of a people for whom Christ died. The soldiers at the barracks would not trust themselves to be powwowed by any of the jabbering heathen medicine men. They found Doctor da Spaniola to be conscientious in his charges. He refused any monetary reward for work done at the mission, and when any fee was paid Dr. Roland received it, and thus was the faithful missionary able to start the hospital fund. The American surgeon was greatly handicapped during the first ten years of his residence in India, the greatest of all obstacles being the superstitious prejudices of the natives; also their ignorance of even the first laws of sanitary methods and their diverse religious beliefs. The language would have proved an insurmountable barrier had it not been for Dr. and Mrs. Roland's unfailing courtesy to act as interpreter as long as their services were needed.

Colonel Silveston made light of his wife's fears when she was informed that one of the natives called her father "a foreign devil." Puerile or not, Mrs. Silveston could not hide her anxiety if her husband or father failed to return home at his usual time. If the skilful surgeon ever regretted his not being able to return to his native land, he never voiced the matter to anyone, but, instead, despite the heat entered fully into the joys and sorrows of his daughter's life and rejoiced that his beloved granddaughter was too young to realize what sorrow meant when the dread fever claimed her brothers in infancy. Whenever such dark clouds of trouble overshadowed their happy home Patricia's father was rejoiced that even at such times they could trace a gleam of the All Father's

love and care. Truly, Aunt Ruthie, too, counted not her life dear, for in joy and sorrow, in sickness and in health, she rendered faithful, loving service for her old master's child.

Strange things happen in this world. Surely it passed the comprehension of the master of "The Hedges," that bright, merry Ruth would one day use the knowledge gained at the old plantation to teach his little granddaughter the first rudiments of arithmetic and reading in the far-away country of India. Miss Annabelle's "American rebel" was a devoted mother and ever evinced a deep interest in her daughter's well-being and studies and no amount of coaxing would gain her consent for Ronla to leave the bungalow during the hours her grandfather set apart for her instruction. Many English officers and missionaries sent their children home to be educated. Thanks to Doctor da Spaniola and the merry student's good constitution, her case was an exception. Thus were her parents saved the agony of parting with their one ewe lamb and their child the heart-rending pangs of homesickness. After Aunt Ruthie laid down the cudgels, a course of study was arranged and certain hours devoted to the quest of knowledge whether or not little Princess Ronla always appreciated the privileges accorded her.

The Colonel was very proud of his bright spirited daughter and happy in her companionship during many of his leisure hours. Her fondness for animals she inherited from her father and he found her an apt pupil indeed. Many students at West Point would be proud to ride as well as this slip of a girl in

her teens. When seventeen, the Colonel's daughter was a tall, slender girl with golden brown hair, dark eyes, straight pearly teeth and gave promise of becoming as attractive a woman as her own mother and grandmother, though in a measure more self-reliant than either of the other daughters of the far-away sunny southland. Ronla Silveston met many cultured people in the army circle and was in touch with many strange travelers, as they, like the flash of a meteor, would rest a few hours or days in the vicinity of the English mission. All this conduced to give the Colonel's daughter a wider and somewhat different experience and mode of life than if she had been reared in the quiet seclusion of "The Hedges," her mother's early home.

The Colonel desired to give his daughter the Princess' gift on her seventeenth birthday, but her mother pleaded that he might withhold the presentation for another year. A compromise was at length arranged, consequently the case was brought forth and the Princess' rescuer had the pleasure of showing the costly circlet of diamonds to his daughter and acquaint her with the fact that in another year the ring would be truly her own.

Ronla was surprised and delighted, but after inquiring why they had never spoken of the ring before, the Colonel said, "Your mother thinks it ill-bred to brag of one's possessions. You know, dear, children are not always guarded in their speech, so in consequence thereof your mother wisely judged to keep the ring hidden until such time that you were older and better able to appreciate the princely gift."

Turning and gazing at the sparkling gems, Ronla at length remarked, "Grandpa insists mother is always right and I guess she is." Adding after a pause, "What you do not know or see, you do not hanker after."

"Then I did wrong to show you the ring today?"

Ronla wound her arms around her father's neck and answered affectionately, "Of course you didn't. I am not a child any more. I can wait. It was sweet of you to show it to me. I really would rather not have the care of it now. I might not be able to study in the glare of such dazzling brightness." Mrs. Silveston joined in the general merriment when her daughter further said, as she rose to pick up a book, "You know, daddy dear, I graduate—quitate—next spring, so I must not allow anything to disturb the serenity of my wonderful mind this coming winter."

A week after this little incident the Governor commissioned Colonel Silveston and a few of his trusty volunteers to act as escort for a party of noted friends whom he desired to have taken over to Elephantine Caves, one of the showplaces of Bombay.

Ronla's father was also commanded to carry a cordial invitation to his wife and daughter, while the Governor arranged to meet them later on the flagship of the English squadron, which was then resting in the harbor, where the entire party were to dine and remain for the dance.

Ronla was delighted, especially as such occasions were quite a boon and relieved the monotony of the necessarily uneventful life of the happy school-girl. The birthplace and where Ronla Silveston had since

resided is a seaport town, the capital also of the Governorship of Bombay. It has a fine harbor and is situated on the island of Bombay, which connects Salsette Island and the mainland. The trip across the bay to the caves was of no especial interest to Ronla, with the exception of trying to return the kindness of the Governor by assisting to entertain his guests. The school-girl's view-point of these trips was duty first and pleasure afterwards.

Rising to leave the apartment, Mrs. Silveston smiled when out of the exuberance of her girlish heart her daughter exclaimed, "Oh! daddy, your diamond would just love to hug the Governor. Just think, it will be full moon tonight, too. Here is a good hug, mother, for marrying a Colonel"—glancing saucily at her father—"who rescues Princesses and whom the Governor honors." Then rushing over to her father in her usual impulsive way she threw her arms around his neck, and whispered, "Don't be jealous, daddy, if I should hug the Governor."

"Heigh-ho! What is all this? Grandfathers come before governors."

Ronla, in high glee, threw him a kiss with her hand and when about to reply a knock was heard and when commanded to enter Aunt Ruthie courteously said, "Leetle Missie, honey-chile sez de clock am runnin' on, an' sakes alive! ef you specs ter gwine wid de Kulnel yo' jes' bettah hurry some—so yo' had."

The loving grandparent came near being their undoing, for when the happy maiden entered her own domain she found a handsome evening wrap

lying beside her white dress on the bed. Ronla insisted upon rushing back to the library and like a cyclone gave the donor several of the real kind of hugs, exclaiming, "Oh, grandpa, you are a dear," and was gone.

Colonel Silveston and party managed, after all, to be at the wharf as planned, where they boarded the launches which were to carry them over to the caves. Ronla made an ideal cicerone, having been over so many times, and being also familiar with the heathen religions by which she had been surrounded since her birth. The Admiral's daughter and son found her to be a charming companion as the launch prodded her way across the bay to the caves, and when about to land, Ronla remarked, "On yonder rock Brahman built a temple. As you see, the temple is in ruins, yet still the natives come over here on holy days to worship the gods of their ancestors."

Miss Topham clung to her new friend when later climbing the stone steps, and shuddered somewhat when she beheld the half-naked Hindoos, in many stages of squalor, asking alms and selling various charms, jewelry and gold beetles. Ronla smiled reassuringly and said, "You have nothing to fear, Miss Topham, the poor souls are perfectly harmless. Look yonder! See that idol cut in the rock, it represents the Hindoo Triad—Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. The latter is devoutly worshipped as the Virgin. Father says that is the tribute the heathen pay to the supreme blessing of maternity."

"How is it that they allowed their temple to fall away in ruins?"

"Poor souls, it was not their fault that their temples were despoiled, Mr. Topham. When the Portuguese came with sword and cross they showed little reverence for the homes of the pagan gods." Thus they chatted on until they arrived at the flagship. After dinner Colonel Silveston and daughter were making survey of the fine man-of-war and viewing the interesting sights in the harbor when they ran across the little Admiral who cordially said, "Come into my den for a chat."

Ronla's eyes opened wide in surprise when her father answered, "We will be delighted to do so, Watson; you have only to lead the way."

Later, when comfortably ensconced in his cabin, the Colonel remarked, laughing, "This school-girl is astonished that I dare address the world-renowned Admiral Topham by his first name." The person addressed smiled and raised his hand to desist, for all the honors that had been heaped upon him never changed his loyalty to his old friends be they high or low in rank of society; nevertheless, the happy school-girl was young enough to be rather awed by the presence of so famous an Admiral, and though her lips remained closed, her eyes conveyed the message that she desired her father to solve the riddle. The Admiral laughed with the abandon of another happy school-boy when his old chum rightly interpreting his daughter's mute appeal, answered, soberly, "I never would have conned those Latin verbs at Oxford had I known that a great Admiral was present." Ronla joined in the merriment when the speaker added, as he lifted his eyes to cast a

sly glance at his host, "Oh! to think that I dared to throw a pillow at his honorable head."

Ronla's cape fell off her shoulders and she was truly the embodiment of girlish loveliness and grace when she leaned toward the kindly old gentleman and remarked pleadingly, "You will not place father in irons for his offence, will you, Sir Admiral?"

"Child, were he guilty of a treasonable offence it would be hard to withstand so sweet a pleader." Laying his hand affectionately on the Colonel's shoulder he said with deep feeling, "Reginald, those old days at college are placed among my dearest memories of the past. Yes! your sweet daughter is right to be proud of such a father, if all accounts be true. No, Reginald, I will not forfeit the Governor's good-will by arresting his coadjutor at present." The Colonel looked incredulous, while his daughter's face depicted the pleasure she felt as she listened. Smiling, Admiral Topham further remarked, "Reginald, when I go home again I shall make it a point to call at Sergis Castle; the kindly old Duke often speaks of you. Ah, somebody else is proud of my room-mate." Laughing, he added, "Ho! Ho! My lady, I see an old gentleman like me will not be allowed to bask in your sweet smiles long. Hark! Yes, here come the First Lieutenant and my scamp of a son."

The Colonel laughed, but noted the fact that the Admiral's tone of voice implied that he was pretty proud of 'my scamp', therefore he had not the slightest compunctions in allowing his daughter to follow Mr. Topham's leadership when they walked out into the inky darkness of an early Indian nightfall.

CHAPTER V

AN UPRISING AND A CONSPIRATOR

THERE were only a few lights on deck when the Colonel's daughter followed her rescuers—even these were extinguished later, to allow the Admiral's guests the opportunity to enjoy the very first gleams of silvery radiance as the Queen of Night approached.

The Lieutenant led the way to the nook where Mrs. Silveston and Miss Topham were resting. Several gentlemen rose at their approach and the Admiral's daughter inquired mirthfully, "Ah, fair truant, give an account of yourself." Laughing, Ronla answered, "It was a clear case of kidnapping; mother, kindly thank my gallant rescuers."

Mrs. Silveston obeyed her daughter's mandate, to which the gentlemen bowed in mock seriousness as they thus acknowledged her thanks for their knightly deed.

The black shiny water claimed the attention of the party. A few phosphorescent touches only relieved the awe-inspiring scene. Ronla laughed when the brave Admiral's daughter said, "Let us talk of something more cheerful; that water gives me the creeps." The stars were hidden by a heavy curtain and the only lights visible were on the different craft in the harbor and a few more twinkled

faintly in several of the tall buildings in yonder city of Bombay.

Miss Topham chose a favorite subject and said, "Mrs. Silveston, I was amazed to find such shops and such a city as Bombay in India."

"I am not surprised that you feel so. Next to Calcutta it is more European than any city in the Indian Empire, and I suppose it will remain so while the sea casts the commerce of the world upon her wharves."

"How do you like living in this heathen country, Miss Silveston?"

"Why, I am a regular 'Injin.' Are you not afraid?"

Mrs. Silveston joined in the general laughter, then remarked graciously, "It is truly the fact. Daughter has known no other home than the Government House in yonder city. Her father was stationed several years at Calcutta. If you go there, Miss Topham, you will find the Government House at the capital the most palatial in the world. Notwithstanding its sumptuousness, my husband has never expressed any special regret that he was commanded to cross the empire to Bombay."

Bent on mischief the Colonel's daughter said, "How strange!"

"Explain this mystery, Miss Silveston," pleaded that scamp of a son.

Taking her mother's hand she said coaxingly, "Dare I tell them how a brave Colonel captured an American rebel over in yonder city?"

Every one laughed when Mr. Topham exclaimed,

"Are there any more such 'rebels' over there? Miss Ronla, if there are I think I could exist in yonder city too."

"I do not know about finding any rebels to suit you, but there are plenty of rich Parsees."

"I am not a bit interested in the bankers' daughters when I can bask in the smiles of a real rebel's offspring."

Mr. Topham smiled when their chaperone leaned forward and said, "In America's name I thank you."

"Miss Ronla, I see your mother doubts my word. You will not treat me so unkindly, will you?"

"I do not dare express my opinion now, school children are always under tutors and governors, you know."

"Laugh away, fair miss. One thing I know that may interest you," spoke Miss Topham, "are the wonderful shops over in yonder city."

There was another general outburst of merriment when the Admiral's son turned to the Lieutenant, saying ironically, "Isn't that like a woman, all she cares for is the shops."

The scamp looked somewhat flustered when his sister mischievously answered, "Ah, my lord! men are not at all vain. Why, Miss Silveston, one day brother hunted——"

Laughing, the merry school-girl remarked, "Pardon the interruption, but I see Mr. Topham has a fondness for life in the jungle too."

Lieutenant Blakely, smiling, said as he leaned toward the Indian maiden, "Mercy! Miss Silveston, I know you are too tender-hearted to hound a man when he is down."

Mr. Topham joined in the general merriment when Ronla Silveston answered with the abandon of a saucy school-girl, "Thank you, Lieutenant, 'de cockles ob me h'art am so flustery wid yo' speechifyn' I's can't spoke on no mo.'" The speaker then added quite soberly, "Did you miss your long English sunsets tonight?"

Mr. Topham had an inquiring mind and when he realized that the mystery of that special hunting trip, through the kindly interposition of his friend, was not to be disclosed he answered, genially, "Not particularly, Miss Silveston, although it did seem a queer freak of nature for an Englishman to behold the city enveloped in dense darkness immediately after the disappearance of the sun."

Lieutenant Blakely claimed Miss Topham's attentions and the sweet chaperone being well entertained by two of the ship's officers, the Admiral's son turned to the obliging cicerone of the afternoon and said, "Miss Silveston, I was amazed to find such fine colleges, esplanades and wharves in Bombay."

"Yes, I suppose you were. These and many other wonderful strides toward a higher civilization came in with the American war."

"How so?"

"Father told me that no city was so prosperous as yonder city in 1865. Then the world's supply of cotton fell back on India and Egypt."

"Ah, I see!"

"Father further said that there were panics, bankruptcy and horrible despair when the word was received that General Lee had surrendered. One

Parsee firm failed for fifteen millions." Turning she added, "See those tall buildings over yonder?"

"Yes, they are sky-scrapers, truly."

"They were, also, the outcome of the cotton mania." Then she added excitedly, "Look, Mr. Topham, the moonlight is illuminating the city. You are certainly fortunate in having such a night."

"Miss Silveston, I truly account myself most fortunate."

The happy school-girl seemingly noticed not the implied compliment, but lifting her eyes, shyly said, "Little America stirs the old world sometimes." Then added soberly, "The Parsees have their headquarters over in yonder city. They are accounted the richest, most powerful and charitable of India's subjects. They number less than one hundred thousand, nevertheless they have untold millions in the banks scattered in the Far East."

"The Hindoos are an illiterate lot?"

"Yes, Mr. Topham, only one in ten can read. They are quite a contrast to the Parsees, who are noted for their integrity and progressiveness, even the women are educated. In Bombay there is a large school for boys and girls. Yes, the Parsees are universally educated."

"Is that where you received your education?"

"No, I never attended any school." The speaker added, as her face was illumined with a bunch of smiles, "Rebel Injins too strepterus. Laws, dey hab ter be kept close ter home." The speaker shook her head dissentingly when Mr. Topham said, "I shall be a firm believer in home education after tonight." He

then added soberly, "Tell me, Miss Silveston, are there any great philanthropists among yonder Parsee millionaires?"

"Indeed there are. Havinji M. Wadia gave Bombay nine hundred thousand for ameliorating the condition of the poor and promoting education. Another gentleman who commenced life in poverty gave ten millions for a Parsee institute building—and this is not all. A woman named Petit, whose family made a million in cotton, gave funds for a girls' orphanage. I am proud to say another widow of the famous Wadia family gave to Bombay its first hospital and about a million and a half in private alms."

"All honor to the fair sex." He added earnestly, "I have had a most enjoyable day and I thank you so much, Miss Silveston, in making this a memorable night."

"If I were Aunt Ruthie, Mr. Topham, I would curtsy and say, 'Fo' de lan' sake, marsa, I's done nuffin—thankee.'"

Mr. Topham laughed so heartily at the saucy mimic that the Lieutenant turned to say, "Mrs. Silveston, command your daughter to speak louder next time, so we can all laugh."

The sweet chaperone smiled when Miss Topham pretended to feel neglected and remarked poutingly, "Please banish all lieutenants who are not satisfied with the favors the gods bestow upon them."

Lieutenant Blakely rose, saying, "May I make amends, fair lady, by desiring the first dance? Hark! the musicians have started. Come, am I to be honored?" Miss Topham rose slowly and said

pleadingly, "Would you forgive him, dear chaperone?" Mrs. Silveston patted the little hand as she answered, "You know what the poet says about forgiveness." Adding, smilingly, "I guess you will have to be a martyr to the cause." The Lieutenant showed two rows of pearly teeth as he smiled when Miss Topham said, quizzically, "True to my sex—I suppose I must obey." Mr. Topham now rose and made a like request and led the fair cicerone away. Shortly after the happy couples begged to be excused, an admiral and a colonel arrived to release the other two gentlemen of the party. There were no lights on deck except where the band was stationed. Even the reflectors were so placed that neither guests nor merry dancers need be troubled with the glare of the lamps. The sweet chaperone was truly happy as she watched the dancers and the Queen of Night's illumination of the harbor and yonder city of Bombay.

The younger members of the party returned ever and anon to their empty chairs and for them six bells came all too soon. Ronla was rather quiet on her homeward journey. Yes, she decided it had been a "red letter day" and this especial trip to Elephantine Caves she tucked away among her hidden treasures. The dance in the moonlight, the salute of twenty-one guns, the sight of the English squadron in full gala attire and their stately procession around the flagship, were surely enough pleasurable events to delight the heart of any young miss in her teens, consequently when kissing her mother good night she said, "Oh, mother, are we not proud of father!" Then in her usual impulsive way she hugged the tired chaperone,

adding, "I would not give up daddy for all the admirals in the world."

The Colonel entering the room folded his daughter to his heart, saying more in earnest than jest, "And I own the finest diamond in the world."

Mrs. Silveston smiled, but quietly remarked, "Reginald dear, Ronla has had flattery enough for one day;" but the happy child laughed gleefully when her father pretended to whisper, "Do not tell mother, child, or she might be jealous, but the Admiral said my little girl was a dear." Mrs. Silveston laughed in her low musical way when her husband further said, "Run quickly to bed, Ronla, I am better able to withstand her wrath than you are. Good night. God keep our darling." On leaving the library the youthful cicerone heard her beloved mother softly murmur, "Amen."

Ronla Silveston felt that she was quite a young lady when on her next birthday she became the happy possessor of the Princess' gift, for with the exception of a course of reading her school duties were accounted a thing of the past.

One day not long after this happy occasion the Governor remarked to his doughty Colonel, "I shall have to start an investigation and learn what treason there is being plotted at Tiger Hall. My quarters are being deserted these days and I thought your daughter was a friend of mine too."

"A most staunch one, dear Governor; but do not despair, a word of warning from me will turn the tide and set matters straight at once."

There lurked a mischievous twinkle in the Gover-

nor's eyes though he replied quite soberly, "Do not be too sure, Colonel, I am willing to stake a fortune that the witcheries of yonder charming Indian will win the day."

Ronla was highly amused when her father narrated the little incident and her grandfather laughed quite heartily when she remarked, "I see there is nothing left for me to do but elope, when I have forfeited the good will of my dear Governor. If Jim refuses, you will have to run with me, grandpa."

Several days passed without the upheaval and excitement of an elopement and after the evening meal Ronla found her father lounging disconsolately on the couch, so she crossed the room quickly, saying anxiously, "Are you ill, father?"

"No, child, certainly not."

Drawing his lovely daughter close beside him, while her head rested on his shoulder, they chatted of the morning ride and other events, until the sweet hostess joined them, when the Colonel rose and glancing at his timepiece remarked, "I am sorry that stern duy calls me away, Patricia."

Clasping his beloved wife in close embrace he added most affectionately, "Do not worry, darling, if I am unable to return tonight. I promise to come as soon as I can be spared."

Then noticing his daughter's questioning looks, he stooped to kiss her, and as her arms found their way around his neck, he said, "Daddy's diamond must be mother's little comforter and take my place tonight if I am not back by ten o'clock. Where is your grandfather, Ronla?" Footsteps were heard at that

moment on the porch and the Colonel muttered, "Ah! there he is."

Ronla had her own misgivings when she beheld the troubled look on her father's face as he hurried from the room. The good doctor was amazed when some one wrung his hand in the darkness and huskily whispered, "There's an uprising in yonder village, father. Thank God you are here to care for my jewels. Do not tell them tonight. Good-bye, it is uncertain when I shall return."

If America's surgeon had been waylaid by one of Durga's ghouls, he could not have been more stunned and speechless, and while standing gazing out in the darkness which had engulfed the startling apparition, a figure quietly crept up to him and clutched his arm, saying anxiously, "Has something dreadful happened, grandpa?"

The person addressed tried to answer playfully, "Aunt Sue used to say, 'You might as well kill one as "fright" them to death, child.'"

"I am not a child, grandpa; please do not evade my question. Where has father gone?"

"Your father commanded me not to tell you tonight, dear."

"Dear old daddy! Is he in danger?" Commencing to sob, she added, "I must know, grandpa."

"Try and control yourself, Ronla, your mother must not know that your father has been sent to quell an uprising over in yonder village."

Just as the Colonel's daughter gasped in terror-stricken tones, "Gone—to battle," the door opened and a voice was heard saying, "Why are you and father remaining so long out in the darkness?"

Dr. da Spaniola could not trust his voice to make reply, so gratefully patted the little figure at his side when she managed to answer, "The waves are having a frolic tonight; come out and join us, mother."

"Not tonight, dear."

Entering the lighted apartment the Doctor tried to remark playfully, "Naughty Governor, to lure away my lady's sweetheart." Stooping to kiss away all worries he added, tenderly, "Come, Patricia, have a game of chess."

"Yes! Do play, mother. I'll run and get my work-bag and be back in a moment."

Aunt Ruthie was resting in her honey-child's semi-lighted dressing room, when suddenly, like an arrow from a catapult, Ronla knelt at her side, clutched her arm and greatly startled her dusky nurse when she whispered, huskily, "There is fighting over in yonder village. Father and the soldiers have gone." Wringing her hands falteringly she said between sobs, "Oh, mammy! What shall we do?"

Aunt Ruthie arose, exclaiming, "Lawd ha' mussy, whar am me honey-chile?"

Ronla placed her hand over the old auntie's mouth and answered, "Hush, mammy, father does not wish mother to know tonight." Aunt Ruthie drew the weeping girl in her embrace, saying coaxingly, "Laws! Leetle Missie, doan't cry dat-a-way, hit may be only one dem falsy 'larms atar all, so hit may."

"Oh, mammy, what will we all do if anything happens to father!"

"Lan' sake, chile, de Kulnel may sen' dem pesky Injins skeedoin' an' be back heah laughin' in de

mornin'. Laws, run 'long, Missie Ronla. Dar now, doan't let me honey-chile seed sech a grubersom' face, hit'll nebber do. Iz clar no."

"Thank you, mammy, for mother's sake I will try to be cheerful." Picking up her embroidery bag she slowly left the apartment. Entering the library the Colonel's daughter ensconced herself in her father's comfy chair near the players. The hands of the clock moved slowly as if weighted with lead, so thought two anxious occupants of the room, while its fair mistress was nonplussed at her unusual easy victories and inquired several times, saying anxiously, "Are you very tired, father?" Doctor da Spaniola tried to concentrate his thoughts on the game, even though it seemed an impossible task. Ten o'clock struck and yet the master of Tiger Hall failed to appear. Ronla appreciated the strain her blessed old grandfather was enduring, so she rose and resting her hand on her mother's shoulder said, pleadingly, "Aunt Ruthie is very tired, grandpa, so I am going to kidnap her charge and carry her off to her room. Father may come before mammy is through her wonderful ministrations." Mrs. Silveston obeyed most reluctantly. Aunt Ruthie did her best to reassure her honey-child. Nevertheless, her efforts were partly futile on account of Father Somnus' messengers never arriving at Tiger Hall until the wee hours of the morning. The dear old grandfather spent the midnight vigil in prayer and when early in the morning he found the daily papers just teeming with news of the "revolt," he knew that it was impossible longer to withhold the reason of the Colonel's enforced

absence. Later, the little family were gathered around the couch in the library where, crushed with anxious fears, lay the beloved mistress of Tiger Hall. Ever and anon the old colored mammy would bathe her honey-child's head, while Ronla and her grandfather tried to encourage the sufferer to hope for the best and accept the brightest view of the situation even though their own hearts were heavily weighted with anxious fears.

The Doctor left the hall several times to ascertain the latest news from the seat of war, but sad and discouraged he had to admit again at noon that the Governor had not received any definite bulletins as yet. Late that afternoon hasty footsteps were heard. Not knowing what the tidings might prove to be, the Doctor pushed the old nurse ruthlessly aside and rushed out to intercept the messenger. The faithful old nurse tried to calm her honey-child and her daughter rushed to her assistance. Their combined efforts were in vain. With added strength of a person in a state of frenzy the Colonel's wife eluded her captors and hastened after her father. Doctor da Spaniola was so engrossed listening to Captain Crosswell that he was not aware of his daughter's presence until he heard a heart-breaking moan as she fell in a heap at his feet.

Thrice blessed was it that Aunt Ruthie was still at the helm and that Grandpa da Spaniola was not far, far away over the sea in America, for Ronla's mother was so prostrated and stunned by the shock, she was not able to assist them in any way whatever. Yes, it was seemingly a mercy that the Colonel's

widow was oblivious of all that was transpiring around her. Aunt Ruthie was a faithful nurse and the Doctor could trust her implicitly. Fortunate, indeed, that such was the case, for the heart-broken Indian maiden needed a loving, sympathizing protector when her beloved father's form, covered with an English flag, was carried into their happy bungalow home.

Colonel Silveston was buried with military honors, but Ronla's mother was so very ill that Doctor da Spaniola alone attended the services in the state reception room and the commitment of the body in the grounds belonging to the little English Mission.

Colonel Silveston's body lay in state the third day. At the foot of the bier, among a bank of flowers, the Doctor read these lines:

"Life's race well run,
Life's work all done,
Life's victory won;
Now cometh rest."

Yes! In the path of duty Colonel Silveston had fallen. Truly another loyal heart, far from his native heath, had given his life for his country. Doctor da Spaniola attended carefully to all the sad details of the funeral, also instructed Ronla to lay aside the different articles in the papers, also cards from floral gifts and letters, as he was desirous of keeping whatever he thought his daughter would treasure, when stronger and able to look them over. A notification of the Colonel's death and several papers were forwarded to his brother, Lord Silveston,

in England. Word was also sent to Captain and Mrs. Wheeling.

The morning after the Colonel was laid to rest, rising after breakfast Doctor da Spaniola remarked wearily, "Come over to me, dear; I desire your advice, child; you will have to help your old grandfather pilot our little ship of state now." The old gentleman led the somber, black-robed figure to the couch. While resting with his arms around Ronla's waist he further said, sadly, "Your mother is not able to be bothered with finances even if she understood them, so you must help me. Listen, Ronla, the Governor has kindly given me permission to remain at Tiger Hall for another month, but, really, do you not think it would be better for your mother to move as soon as possible?"

"Yes, grandpa, I do."

"Your views accord with mine then—" The Doctor paused a moment, then further remarked, "Our good friends at the mission are of the same opinion. Dr. Roland suggested my trying to obtain that little white bungalow which is situated on the grounds of the hotel, where we stayed when we first came to India. I will go to see the proprietor today and if all goes well we will move back in the city next Friday."

"I hope you will be successful, grandpa. I know mother would prefer living in a bungalow. I remember the grounds are fairly shaded and the view of the dear old sea not lost." A deep touch of pathos entered the speaker's voice when she added, "Dear old daddy took me over to the hotel one day and

told me there was where he came a-courting. Oh, grandpa! What shall we do without father?"

Soothing the weeping girl Patricia's father said sadly, "Yes child, we shall all miss him sorely." Then he added regretfully, "Dear child, I am grieved to have to tell you that our present income will not allow us to keep Blackie and Fan." If such a proposition had been suggested only a few weeks ago it would have received a stirring protest, but as the Colonel's daughter nestled in her grandfather's arms that morning, it seemed only one more sad break in the happy past. Brushing away the tears, Ronla said languidly, "Do what you think best, grandpa."

Doctor da Spaniola kissed the sad white face and said in relieved tones, "Thank you, child, you know your old grandfather would not deny you a single pleasure if he could help it."

Ronla tightened the grasp of the speaker's hand and answered in low tones as she nestled closer in his arms, "Do not bother about me, grandpa, we must only think of mother." There was a little catch in her voice when the late Colonel's daughter added, sorrowfully, "We must not lose her too."

"God helping us, dear, we will do our best. Now that I know you are so willing to help me, my heart is relieved of a great burden, child." Rising, Doctor da Spaniola remarked more cheerfully, "Our counter-sign will be 'Pray and work for mother,' and I know Aunt Ruthie will assist us too."

Doctor da Spaniola's journey into the city was not in vain. Ronla Silveston astonished the old Southern mammy with her serious demeanor and housewifely

ways and suggestions. Yes, the charming, care-free butterfly was a very busy white moth until after the late Colonel's family were settled in their new quarters in the busy, bustling city of Bombay. Mrs. Silveston was too ill when they moved to accompany the Doctor and her daughter over to the hotel every evening for table d'hôte. One evening, about a month later, Mrs. Silveston remarked to Aunt Ruthie when about to leave the bungalow, "Mammy, are you sure that you have not regretted your decision about going over with us to the hotel?"

"Fo' de lan' sake! honey," standing with arms akimbo and grinning, "doan't yo' bodder 'bout yo' ole nuss. Laws, no boddies starbes w'en dey tarries by de stuff. Gwine long, chile, I's nebber wants fur nuffin in dis house yit, nor in me ole marsa's nuther. I clar, chile, yo' spile me good Marsa Doctah's stuff ef yo' stan' dar talkin' dat-a-way any mo'."

"What is so amusing, mother?" inquired her daughter.

"Nothing, only Aunt Ruthie seems to think she has the best of the bargain when she 'tarries beside the stuff.' Come, hurry, child, I guess grandfather thinks we are not coming over this evening."

Doctor da Spaniola now realized that the entire support of his daughter's family devolved upon him. Without speaking of his intention even to his brave little coadjutor, the old gentleman was studying to arrange his finances so that in the course of a year he might be able to take them back to America. Mr. Trouble rarely appears alone; surely his presence caused changes enough without the added unkindness

of bringing to the little white bungalow the most unwelcome of all people, the Messrs. Losses and Worry. Ronla named the bungalow Seafoam Castle. One morning, a year after leaving Tiger Hall the mail bag contained a letter bearing a United States post-mark. Ronla was greatly alarmed when her grandfather dropped the letter. The surgeon seemed stunned and speechless after he opened the official-looking document and learned that most of the savings of a lifetime were gone. The dear old man rallied and tried to keep up his courage for the family's sake even though a certain investment in a silver mine was proven to be a fake. Yes, all that was left were the certificates in his strong box in the Parsee's bank.

The old nurse and Ronla only knew of this new misfortune. The late Colonel's wife was too grief-stricken at the loss of her husband to realize their sad predicament and leaned upon her father with the trustful simplicity of a little child acquiescing meekly in whatever plans were proposed. Financial worries had never been a part of Patricia da Spaniola's life in the old planter's home, while in India the brave Colonel had been most lavish in his bestowal of gifts and money.

When his little coadjutor was trying to comfort him the good surgeon replied, "Ronla, your mother is not well enough to cope with these new worries. Aunt Ruthie, bless her! suggests that we let her attend to the marketing and give up going over to the hotel for table d'hôte."

"That is a fine idea, grandpa. I will help, too, if you promise not to worry yourself sick."

"Not while I have such a dear little comforter to help me over all the hard places." Adding anxiously, "But, child, what reason will you give your mother?"

"Do not have a care about that, Aunt Ruthie will find a way, she usually accomplishes the most difficult mission most tactfully. I will speak to her. Hark! grandpa, ten o'clock; you ought to be on your way over to the dispensary. Dr. Roland will wonder what has happened." As she gave him a parting hug and kiss, she added, "Be sure and let all Seafoamy troubles wash out of sight; we are not yet in such a sad plight as the poor benighted heathen you are going over to treat."

"Yes, child, it is sinful to murmur when we still have hope as an anchor to the soul. Good-bye, take care of yourself. I expect to be home to luncheon."

Ronla immediately hunted up the Doctor's black sheep, and shortly afterwards she entered her mistress' room and said, "Honey, ef Marsa Doctah kinder tired ob' gwine ovah ter de big house fer dinnah, would yo' minds, Misses?"

"Indeed I would not, mammy; if it had not been for making more trouble for you, I should have requested him to do so long ago."

"Sakes alive! I's powerful glad-laike yo' feels dat away, fer I knows marsa will say yass now. Thankee, Misses, I must gwine an' 'nounce de 'portant facts dat dinnah will be sarved in de foamy castle ter night. I clar, honey, hit quite chirks me hup. 'Member, Misses, I specs no wastin' ob me fine spankin' dinnah." Mrs. Silveston pleased the old auntie when she smiled as she added, "Bettah

'bey, or yo' nuss might leab an' gwine ovah ter 'Meriky.'

The Colonel's wife's loss of appetite worried the old auntie very much, and Ronla saw a tear run down her cheek one day when returning with untouched tray. Poor soul, she had high hopes that the dainties thereon would have tempted her mistress to enjoy them.

The family laughed at mammy's little joke of leaving them when they knew very well that it would need a regiment of soldiers to part her from her "honey-chile."

Doctor da Spaniola knew the Colonel's pay was not sufficient to lay aside any great sum. He had spoken often of insuring his life, but, like hundreds of others, had allowed the opportune moment to slip away unheeded—unimproved, lost. Despite this unfortunate state of affairs, Aunt Ruthie and her young mistress managed so well and the next three months were passed so quietly that the Colonel's widow never learned that an alarming crisis in their financial affairs had ever occurred. At the expiration of a year the family residing at Seafoam Castle were still in India with no definite idea when they would be able to leave the "Land of the Thugs."

A few days after this sad anniversary time two gentlemen were returning from an errand of mercy in the little village which had been the scene of the late "revolt," when one of the gentlemen remarked, "Really, Doctor, I think you mistook your calling, you should have studied *Materia Medica* instead of *Theology*. Those parents owe you a debt of grati-

tude. Father Time was a most important factor in that case and moments wasted might have proved most disastrous for the child."

"I am not always so fortunate in my diagnoses." Thus the two gentlemen chatted pleasantly until within a few miles of the city, when at a bend of the road they suddenly halted. Dr. Roland being slightly in advance addressed an elderly gentleman who in great distress was leaning over a young man who lay prone upon the ground in a seeming unconscious state.

"Can I be of service? I am Dr. Roland of the English Mission." Before the elderly gentleman could reply Dr. Roland exclaimed, "Come, Doctor, we are just in time, I did not expect to find another patient for you so soon."

Doctor da Spaniola slipped off his horse to obey the urgent call and while he worked with great dexterity and skill, Dr. Roland remarked to the elderly gentleman when he rose, "It is most providential that we returned this way. Have no fears for the young man, he could not have possibly fallen into better hands. Dr. da Spaniola is one of America's celebrated surgeons who came to India for rest and change, but remained on account of his daughter's marriage to Colonel Silveston."

"Silveston did you say? What nationality?"

Dr. Roland was rather surprised at the curt questioning, but replied, "English."

"Thank you, I thought so."

During this recital the gentleman had walked somewhat apart from the little group and when

Dr. Roland turned to retrace his steps, the Indian servant met him, bowing, and in almost unintelligible English said, "The Doctor wishes to speak with you, sir."

After a hurried colloquy, Dr. Roland jumped on his horse and dashed along at a mad rate toward the city. When Dr. da Spaniola was about to leave his patient after he was comfortably settled in his hotel, the elderly gentleman, a Mr. Knowlton, stepped forward, saying, "I shall always rejoice that when my nephew fell among thieves, that there was a good Samaritan at hand. No. I will not thank you, if you do not wish me too, but kindly allow me to know the sum of my indebtedness."

"Nothing whatever, Mr. Knowlton, I am only glad I could be of service. No. Well then, if my deed was of the slightest value, allow my dear friend Dr. Roland to have the benefit of it, toward his hospital fund."

"Thank you; you are then truly a good Samaritan. Your friend has placed me in his debt, too, so I will not forget the mission—but, stay, I crave a favor. I desire that you shall continue in charge of the case." Smiling cordially, he added, "No, do not think of saying you cannot or the hospital fund may suffer if you refuse."

The surgeon laughed at Mr. Knowlton's droll way of bribing him and replied most graciously, "I know you would not do anything so unkind as that. I wish all favors were so easily granted, for it will give me great pleasure to continue the case; fortunately, I am close at hand over in yonder white

bungalow." Picking up his helmet he added, soberly, "Nurse has full instructions. I will return in two hours and if she desires to see me before that time, the bell boys know where to find me. Good afternoon. I do not anticipate being called."

When the surgeon entered the bungalow Ronla flew into the hall and exclaimed, "Oh, grandpa! I am so glad you've come. We have been having a dreadful time with mother; she was sure something had happened to you."

The tear-stained face of the Colonel's widow spoke volumes, and when the weary surgeon bent to kiss her there was a touch of tender sympathy in his voice when he spoke, "Patricia, dear, you must not allow yourself to become so unnerved; you know people of my calling are often unavoidably detained."

"Yes, I know, father." In midst of a fresh outburst she falteringly replied, "But, Reginald is gone and what is to become of us if anything happens to you?"

"God will always in some way provide, child. Cheer up, darling, I am here now, safe and well, and nothing more serious than an adventure and second operation caused my delay."

"My, grandpa, I should have been with you. Aunt Ruthie says I am a spankin' fine nurse."

Smiling the Doctor replied in bantering tones, "We would not dare to gainsay the statement of such an oracle, would we, dear?" The eloquent look on the sad widow's face gave a silent consent, so the tired surgeon further said, "Fair ladies, lend me your ears, for the curtain is about to rise. If you wish to

learn the principal events of our morning adventure follow me in thought to Piney Woods and Jasmine Road."

"Piney Woods and Jasmine Road!" gasped Ronla's mother. "Why, that is the very place Reginald rescued the Princess."

"There must be a certain fatality about that spot for our family, grandpa."

"Fatality, child. I guess most people would not object to the fatality which heaped upon them honors and gems."

"Ah, Ruby, dear, it must be a good omen. I wonder what 'The Fates' will bestow upon the knight of today's adventure?"

"Nonsense, child, I am not seeking a reward."

"Neither did my dear husband, father, but it is one of my treasures now."

Noting an ominous mistiness gathering in her mother's eyes Ronla quickly said, "I am getting tired of looking at Piney Woods. What else happened?"

"A most unexpected tableau. A groom was holding several horses and an elderly gentleman was bending over a young man who had the misfortune to be thrown from his horse."

Mrs. Silveston looked quite startled and her daughter exclaimed in an awed voice, "was he——"

Grandpa da Spaniola raised his hand as a warning not to interrupt him, and he further said, "Dr. Roland being somewhat in advance, alighted to ascertain if he could be of service, and at his command I rushed to his aid. The elderly gentleman was a picture of distress and hailed our coming with deep

thankfulness, especially after our dear friend acquainted him with the fact that I knew something of surgery."

Ronla, bent on mischief, turned toward her mother and demurely said, "Grandfather told me last winter that modesty and humility were characteristics of many of our truly great men."

Mrs. Silveston smiled and looking up in her sweet, loving way, said, "Pa, I am astonished you did not teach your pupils that it is rude to interrupt. Proceed with the story, I am greatly interested."

"Well, Patricia, a hasty examination disclosed the fact that a delicate though not especially dangerous operation was needed to save the young man's life."

"Oh, grandpa, how did you dare operate on a dusty wayside?"

"Child, sometimes we must dare all or lose, when a precious life is at stake, as in this case. I was simply forced to take the risk even though the instruments had not been specially antiseptized for that particular operation. That is where good training avails. Ronla, I had a very strict disciplinarian at college and heeding his warning to pay special attention to my instruments after using them, helps one to be ready for emergencies, and I sincerely trust no harm will come to my patient for having to act as I did."

"Oh! go on, please, grandpa, it really sounds like a play, your appearing at the opportune moment as actors always do."

"The great poet, you know, says, 'Life is a drama. Listen, some one is knocking,—come.'" Then added, "No, Aunt Ruthie, thank you. I had my luncheon

at the hotel." The old auntie quietly closed the door. The speaker sighed as he rested back in his chair ere he proceeded, "Yes, Patricia, I had an eventful morning."

"Eventful sounds exciting, grandpa; please tell us all about the wonderful drama."

"Well, since you choose to call it a play I will read the poster on the bill-board:

A NEW PLAY: A RACE FOR LIFE

SCENE: A Country Wayside

Dramatis Personæ

An elderly English gentleman.....	Mr. Knowlton
His sick nephew.....	Mr. ——
Servant	Jehashi
A missionary.....	Dr. Roland
A surgeon.....	Dr. da Spaniola

"Well, child, to lay aside all jesting, I believe Dr. Roland was quite pleased with Mr. Knowlton; of course this is not strange, being an Englishman. I was so immersed in my task I had little time for conversation. At my command Dr. Roland rode into the city to the Red Cross Society, engaged a nurse and sent a conveyance to carry the patient back to his hotel—by the way, we are near neighbors. Nurse had everything in order for our reception, as our good friend had given her a written order to present to the proprietor of yonder hotel."

"Oh, grandpa, who are they?"

"Well, Miss Curious, I cannot tell my patient's

name, but the old uncle is a Mr. Knowlton from England. I imagine they must be people of wealth and prominence by the way the servants bustled about at the command of the proprietor and valet."

"Maybe they are noblemen traveling incognito."

"I cannot say, Ronla, only in their faces and manners I think I can discern several generations of courtesy and refinement, be they noblemen or peasants."

"Oh, mother, I have an inspiration—" Mrs. Silveston smiled—"Grandpa is a regular dear; his adventure has given me a fine subject for another sketch and I will call it 'The Great Unknown.' Tell me quickly, is he dark or fair, tall or short patrician or plebeian?"

"What a whirlwind of questions, child. My patient is tall and has the bearing of one well born. The rest, Patricia, dear, I will leave to Ronla's vivid imagination or you will lose your walk. Ronla, please inform Aunt Ruthie that she must accompany you today, I have to keep strict watch over 'the Great Unknown' for several days, for the honor of my country is at stake." When the speaker's little coadjutor left the apartment to again seek that wandering "brack" sheep the surgeon said, "I shall be very busy this week, Patricia, and there is to be no more worrying when I am not home just on the minute. Tut! Tut! the wife of a brave Colonel and the daughter of a man who wields a lancet should not know that such things as nerves exist."

Doctor da Spaniola always made light of his daughter's ailments even though he was well aware of the

fact that the climate and the shock of the Colonel's sudden death had made sad havoc of her appetite and health in general.

One day at luncheon the good surgeon exclaimed, "Daughter, rejoice, America is going to win in the fight against the King of Terrors. My patient will be pushed out on the veranda today. I am as light-hearted as a school-boy. If I had not been near at hand that first night, I hardly think he would be living today. The nurse's faithful obedience to instructions has a share in the victory too."

"Hurrah! a victory over John Bull. Hurrah! for the nurse and young America. Have you learned your patient's name yet, grandpa?"

"Yes, Miss Curious; plain Mr. Augustus."

"What a queer name; it sounds more like a baptismal than surname. Heigh-ho! he may be a real prince traveling incog—My! would not that sound mysterious if I was writing a novel?"

Rising to prepare for the afternoon stroll ere she left the room, she said as she lightly imprinted a kiss on her grandfather's forehead, "Congratulations, Sir Surgeon, for saving my prince's life. Did you tell him that you had just the sweetest princess hidden away over in Seafoam Castle who needed to be rescued from the thralldom of a wicked old grandfather?"

It was really a relief after the strain of the morning to hear Ronla's cheery laugh and there was a smile on the tired surgeon's face as he patted Patricia on the shoulder in affectionate manner, before she rose from the couch to follow her daugh-

ter, and tenderly remarked, "You must not worry, I cannot spare you, dear, and Ronla needs a mother's care, too, even if she has grown rather 'strepterus' lately."

"Really, father, I did not mean to make so much trouble—yes, I promise I will try to be good." Noticing that her father seemed fatigued and as it was quite warm the sweet widow added, "Let your musty books alone this afternoon and rest. Ah, who must obey now?"

On their return from their stroll down by the harbor, Doctor da Spaniola was glad to note the effect of the little outing and Aunt Ruthie was delighted when her frail mistress seemed to enjoy her simple, but well-cooked and finely-served dinner. After a quiet evening at home, Ronla on the way to her own apartment stopped suddenly before her grandfather's open door and exclaimed in surprise, "What is the matter with your hand, grandpa?"

"Hush, child, nothing very serious, I simply scratched my finger a little this morning. Please do not speak of it to your mother or she'll begin to have a hundred fears and fancies. We must spare your mother, child, when we can, for you know she is not as strong as before your dear father left us."

"Yes, I know, grandpa; can I help you?"

"No, thank you, dear Co. (coadjutor), I can manage it. I should have dressed it after I returned home, but I forgot it. Not a word, remember. Look! see, it is only a tiny prick and partly healed already."

"Good-night, grandpa, do take care of yourself.

I really ought to scold you. You are always thinking of others before yourself."

The aged grandparent stooped to kiss the troubled, upturned face and replied in most affectionate tones, "Banish those frowns and run off to bed, your worthless grandfather will be all right in the morning. Pleasant dreams, dear child. Good-night."

CHAPTER VI

AN ADVENTURE AND DEPARTURE

RONLA'S grandfather and Dr. Roland were among the few who had entrée to the apartments of Mr. Knowlton and his nephew, Mr. Augustus, and this "Great Unknown" or "Prince Incog" was most delighted when Doctor da Spaniola rescued him from his prison-like existence and allowed his valet to push his couch out on the veranda, then when tired of listening to reading he and his nurse would find amusement in watching the beautiful sea and the ever-changing panorama of the different sized craft in the harbor, or the busy march of the on-rushing multitude of foreigners and natives who surged past that important hostelry each day. Among the numbers who daily left the tiny white bungalow Mr. Augustus' curiosity was aroused, and he watched for the coming of a very stylish, dainty young lady and her singular-looking party, inasmuch as there was quite a contrast between her own white summer attire and the sombre deep mourning gown of one lady or the typical style of dress of her old Southern mammy, who usually accompanied the ladies on their afternoon rambles; sometimes they would enter the hotel, but more often pass through the big iron gate like many shoppers and sightseers who are bent upon viewing all that is of interest in that large important city, where

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dwell the rich Parsees, the followers of Zoroaster, the Hindoos and also the descendants of Mahomet, the mighty prophet.

When Ronla's "Prince Incog" was able to stroll at will between his apartments and the porch, he missed seeing the little party saunter across the park and several days later, when convinced that they had left town, his uncle entered the room and with troubled countenance said, "Son" (pet name), I am the bearer of sad tidings. Nurse, you must come with me over to the little bungalow, this lazy chap can spare you until bed-time." Then addressing his nephew said, "Son, our good Samaritan is very ill. Dr. Roland has just been here to inform me that he thinks him in a very critical state indeed."

"I am grieved to hear this, uncle. Take the nurse and do your best for him. I owe my life to his promptness and skill. Hurry, nurse!"

When the person addressed returned fully equipped for her task, Mr. Knowlton further said, "Nurse, blood-poisoning has set in. It seems that he scratched his finger the day he operated on my nephew and I am afraid that his thinking it a matter of no moment may cost him his life; you must do your best, nurse. I, too, owe him a debt of gratitude which I can never repay." Laying his hand upon his nephew's bowed head he added most affectionately, "Don't be lonely, lad. I will return as soon as I can. Ring for Edward if you need anything. Good-bye." Lifting his head the convalescent replied quickly, "I am right as a trivet; don't worry about me. I'm well now. Hurry, every minute counts."

Sad, indeed, was the fate of Doctor da Spaniola. Despite the fact that all was done that mortal hands could do, the good surgeon passed on to his long home and his soul was carried away at the change of the tide just before sunset that same day. Mr. Knowlton spared no expense and brought to the good surgeon's bedside the best trained skill the city afforded. Alas! it was only a few short weeks since he remarked to his daughter that he was in perfect health; ah, surely, "In the midst of life we are in death."

That slight cut seemingly healed by first intention, then became festered, and all too late America's celebrated surgeon realized his danger, and when the usual remedies proved abortive, ere he lost consciousness he called Ronla and Aunt Ruthie to his bedside and feebly said, "Ronla, dear, take your mother to England or America at once, she is none too strong. Speak to Dr. Roland. You will find my papers in order in the library desk and my bank book is there too; the keys are in my top bureau drawer."

Aunt Ruthie leaned over to grasp her master's hand and in choking, grief-stricken tones, said, "I clar', marsa, de Lawd will po'vide, fer de good book sez hit, an' laws, dis ole auntie gwinter hul onter dem words powerful tight, an' see! Marsa Doctah," as she stretched out her arms over the bed, "Look! I's got musselly strings in me ole arms yit, so I's hab, dat's suah! ter fite any strepterus pussuns dat dares ter tech me honey-chillun. God bress yo, marsa!" Tears were streaming down the old dusky cheeks when she added, "Doan't worry! dey nebber wants

any bodies ter kar fer dem whiles Aunt Ruthie libes, an' dat's sartin suah, marsa."

The sick man tried to smile, when he feebly answered, "You have always been a comfort to us. I can trust you to do your best. God reward you, auntie. Kiss me, Ronla; you must try to be your sweet cheery self, it will help your mother and Aunt Ruthie too. Will you do this—for—your—old grandfather?"

Mammy exclaimed ere her young mistress could reply, "Sakes alive, marsa, daddy's diamond jes' can't help sparklin' no mo' dan I kin mak' dis ole brack face white-laike an' buful."

"Hush, Aunt Ruthie, here comes mother."

Though Doctor da Spaniola's last thoughts were mainly concerned with the future welfare of his loved ones, he could not be placed in the same category with those who lived in conscious neglect of the value of their souls and then expect time allowed for a death-bed repentance; but of course it was not to be thought a thing incredible that the good surgeon should be anxious in having to leave his own darling child and granddaughter with limited means, and also in a measure unprotected, in a foreign land. Dr. Roland was a tower of strength to his friend and co-worker and he assisted the dying man to look up and trust his loved ones more fully to Him who said, when speaking of his own pure sweet messengers, the flowers, "Are ye of not more value than these?" Ah, his loved ones would not be left desolate when a "sparrow falls not to the ground without his notice." Aunt Ruthie fulfilled her promise and was a 'covert

from the storm' to her honey-child in this new and overwhelming sorrow. Ronla tried to rouse her mother to take a little interest in the plans for the coming journey after her grandfather was laid to rest beside her father, but on finding her efforts to be useless she sought the counsel of her dear friends at the Mission House. A great burden seemed to roll off the troubled maiden's shoulders when assured of the love of Auntie Roland and their willingness to serve her in any way whatever. Dr. Roland had *carte blanche* to arrange for Doctor da Spaniola's funeral services, Aunt Ruthie's young mistress simply saying, "Our finances forbid any extravagant outlay." The speaker's voice trembled when she added, tearfully, "Grandpa is worthy of the best, but I know ostentatious parade would not appeal to him even if we could afford it."

Mr. Augustus walked over to the simple service. Mr. Knowlton and the nurse shook their heads dissentingly, but the convalescent insisted upon paying at least this much respect to the surgeon who had saved his life. An enigma was solved when the persistent gentleman beheld Aunt Ruthie standing in the back of the hall. Learning later that she and the two ladies were a part of the good Samaritan's family, he became an interested listener when Dr. Roland called that evening.

"Mr. Knowlton," remarked the missionary, "I find Mrs. Silveston's family are in quite straitened circumstances." Miss Ronla, poor child, knew nothing about her father's financial affairs until just after his death. She is a brave young lady." The speaker's

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face looked grave when he further said, sadly, "Wife and I will do what we can, but I am afraid, from what I can gather, there will not be much left but the barest subsistence after all expenses are met for that long journey to England."

"I am truly sorry to hear this, Doctor."

"Yes, Mr. Knowlton, it is a sad case. I never knew I was a coward before, but I really dread informing Miss Silveston that to husband their resources they had better travel second or third class."

"Why not write to Lord Silveston?"

"Oh, no, that is out of the question. Mrs. Silveston would starve first; her husband's family never took the trouble to inquire what was to become of them after the Colonel's death."

"I am not surprised, his lordship is so engrossed in his literary work. Lady Silveston was a charming woman. No, this would not have happened had his mother been living."

Mr. Augustus teasingly remarked, "Since when did you know so much about the ways of lords and ladies?"

Laughing, Mr. Knowlton, answered, "Dr. Roland knows the papers love to gossip about the people in high life in England, same as elsewhere in the globe." Then added, with grave earnest manner, "Please do not allow this spoiled invalid to interrupt you."

Dr. Roland smiled, then remarked sadly, "Mrs. Silveston was reared in luxury and still owns land in America today, but that is not available now. My wife and I have had the pleasure of knowing the family

quite intimately for many years and I feel assured they would brave anything rather than be dependent upon others. If such were not the case I could very easily have a purse made up for her benefit at the Government House."

"Thank you, Doctor, for allowing us to know these details. I agree with you, it is a sad case." Glancing affectionately toward his nephew he added kindly, "Listen, I am indebted to Dr. da Spaniola as you already know." Turning to his guest he further remarked, "You must let me help you. This will not be charity, Doctor, it is simply a fee for the operation which the good surgeon refused to accept."

Dr. Roland impulsively grasped Mr. Knowlton's hand, saying feelingly, "Oh, thank you, sir! God will reward you for such kindness to the widow and fatherless." "And orphans," murmured his nephew, Mr. Augustus. Dr. Roland kindly glanced toward the speakers, then added excitedly, "I am as rejoiced as if you were helping me and I think Grandpa da Spaniola would have no objections to assisting his family in this way."

Mr. Knowlton and his nephew excused themselves and walked into the adjoining room a moment. Later returning, Mr. Knowlton said, "I trust you not to mention the matter to the family, Doctor, for Mrs. Silveston might object to allow even this arrangement for her comfort. My nephew wishes you to accept also his check, as he was the one most truly benefited by the kindness and skill of the good Samaritan."

Dr. Roland was deeply touched. Ah, over at the cottage Aunt Ruthie little realized what was happen-

ing at the hotel, when the loyal heart was pouring out her troubles before the mercy-seat, pleading earnestly that somehow the "Great Marsa would help her to provide and care for the dear Colonel's jewels."

Dr. Roland purchased the steamer tickets and when handing them to Aunt Ruthie's young mistress said, smiling, "Ronla, I was most fortunate this morning, the party who expected to have occupied this stateroom was forced to release it. I was delighted for your sake, as all the other first-class cabins were taken. Yes, you were especially fortunate, for in a small offset under the stairway is a couch which will answer well for mammy."

Tears stood in Ronla's eyes and she answered tremulously, "I cannot express how we appreciate your and Auntie Roland's kindness."

"Dear child, you would not deprive us of the blessing of pure religion, would you?" Then rising, he added more brightly, "Can I see your mother today?"

Ronla quickly brushed away the tears, answering graciously, "Yes! Uncle Roland, come over to her dressing room. I am glad to lead the way for so welcome a visitor. You know, you and Auntie have captured Aunt Ruthie's heart. One day she declared to mother that you had kidnapped Miss Crasy's sunshiny ways."

Dr. Roland laughed and answered, "I have heard before that Aunt Ruthie wears, at times, wonderful magnifying glasses."

When Ronla appeared with her guest, mammy smiled a welcome and curtsied in deep respect as she

left the apartment. Greetings over, the Doctor spoke in glowing terms of the famous Peninsular and Oriental Line which connected England and her Asiatic possessions and purposely tried by direct questioning to force his hostess to banish her own weighty trials for a time. Ronla saw through the ruse and was deeply grateful.

"No doubt, Mrs. Silveston, you noted the fact when journeying here that these vessels of the tropics are built to do battle with the sun?"

"Yes, Doctor, I remember."

"You found them less clumsy than steamers on the Atlantic, did you not?"

"Yes, Dr. Roland, I remember Aunt Ruthie was half afraid of the cat-like movements of the sailors when we came."

Dr. Roland felt encouraged and answered, smiling genially, "I suppose their bare feet are responsible for their noiseless tread."

"Yes," wearily spoke the invalid. "But it seemed so strange not to hear them chatter and sing at their work like American sailors."

"I admit, Mrs. Silveston, they are rather like machines, poor heathen Hindoos; it does not seem as if life holds much for them. Fancy working in solemn silence by day and then only have a hard bed on the deck at night! The ship's crew, Miss Ronla, wear white on all occasions of ceremony, but while at work their blue robes form a pleasing contrast to their scarlet or yellow turbans and bright-colored girdles. On my first trip here these sailors and servants gave me my first glimpse of the vivid brightness of India's color scheme."

"I suppose we will meet many nationalities on board the steamer, Uncle Roland?"

"Yes, Ronla, between Bombay and Suez you meet many, even Chinese and Nubians, yet among them all you will not find either in England or America a type that represents a Hindoo. Very naturally, all these novel sights will not appeal to you in the same way, having lived here all your life."

Ronla rose and answered, "I suppose not," as Aunt Ruthie entered the room with a tray. Later, Dr. Roland handed Mrs. Silveston a cup of tea saying, pleadingly, "Will you repay me for my journey by imbibing?" Reluctantly the sad widow held out her hand. Dr. Roland appreciated the effort made and coaxingly said, after her daughter adjusted her pillows so she could sit up, straighter, "Just one wee biscuit, too." Smiling he added, "We will leave the sweet cakes for the young folks." When enjoying the tiny biscuits Dr. Roland remarked, "By the way, Ronla, your aunt wished me to jog Aunt Ruthie's forgettery about that recipe for these 'Virginny' rolls."

"I will see that she receives it."

"Thank you." Adding sadly, "You know we need something." Intercepting Ronla's warning glance he further remarked, smiling, "Good-bye, Mrs. Silveston, wife will run over in the morning. No, Ronla, do not leave your mother. I know the way out perfectly." At the door he turned to say, "Be sure and be careful to put away those tickets safely."

"I will, Uncle Roland. Thank you so much for getting them for us. Oh! what would we——"

Ronla laughed when the missionary smilingly said, "I am too bashful to remain a moment longer. Good-bye."

Mrs. Roland was an angel of mercy to the bereaved ones at Seafoam Castle the next five days; she understood fully that in Mrs. Silveston's present state of health any place in Europe would seem preferable to the Land of the Thugs, where poisoning, robbery, infanticide and murder are daily occurrences. Ronla counted it a privilege to consult Auntie or Uncle Roland when in any perplexity. The morning before they were to sail Aunt Ruthie's young mistress ran into the library and exclaimed, excitedly, "We have a home in the country."

"What do you mean, child? What country?"

"England, of course. Dr. Roland just stopped a minute to give me this letter," adding pleadingly, "But I refuse to say another word until you lie down again." Shaking a pillow the speaker further remarked, "Ah, that's a good child. Now I will tell you. The letter contains the name of an agent who lives in a little village not far from London. Uncle seems to feel confident that he will have something to suit us. When I told Aunt Ruthie she exclaimed—'Hallelujah!'" Kissing the white face resting on the pillow the speaker added joyfully, "Oh! Ruby, dear. Just think—a little garden with grass and flowers. My! I believe I feel like shouting too."

Like a happy bird Ronla flitted away to her unfinished task of packing and soon there floated into the library the strains of "Roll! Jordan, roll." Poor old auntie thought her honey-child—the pitch and

toss battle she so dreaded is surely nigh at hand—nevertheless, despite this fact the prospect of a little home out in “God’s country” had an exhilarating effect upon the worker. Even the sad, heart-broken widow lifted her heart in thankfulness for this ray of cheer to lighten their darkened road.

Ronla was too weary to sleep when she sought her dismantled, forlorn-looking room. What changes had entered her life! Among all the sad musings when her mind dwelt upon her new home, she hoped that somewhere at hand would be the gleaming of water, for since a wee child the lullaby which had chased her thoughts to dreamland each night was the song of the plangent waves as they broke on the rocky shore of her Indian home.

Dr. Roland accompanied the grief-stricken party to the steamer. Dear Auntie Roland rushed back to the empty library and had a good cry ere walking back to the Mission House.

Ronla was surprised to find Mr. Augustus and his uncle awaiting their coming near the gangway. The ‘Prince Incog’ led the way to a less congested part of the deck and was presented to the ladies by the English missionary. Mrs. Silveston roused herself, and graciously thanked her friends for their kindness, knowing well her own kith and kin could not have performed more kindly services. Dr. Roland had been like a father and when forced to bid him good-bye, Ronla kissed him, being too overcome to speak when he muttered, “God’s blessing follow you, dear child.” Turning to hide her confusion and tears, Mr. Knowlton cheerily remarked, “I wish I was a missionary. My! Doctor, I am jealous of you.”

Ronla really felt flustered about acting so impulsively; but Dr. Roland's low pleased laugh helped her to gain control of herself and she smiled when Mr. Knowlton further remarked, "Oh! Miss Silveston, do you not think I would make a fine uncle too?"

"Hark! Uncle. Stop teasing! There is the last bell, we'd better be hurrying along after the good Doctor unless you desire to go home before your time." Mr. Augustus held Ronla's hand in his tight grasp a moment, when his uncle was bidding her mother adieu, and there was a merry twinkle in his eyes when he said as he gazed so earnestly into the sad white face, "Good-bye, Miss Silveston. King Neptune is a good friend of mine and I have written him to treat you well." Then casting aside his jesting tone he bowed before Mrs. Silveston and further remarked, "I will never forget the kindly gentleman who saved my life. Good-bye." In passing the old auntie, who stood somewhat apart from the ladies, he hastily said, "Mammy, your charges need the smiles of the sun goddess; keep them out on deck as much as possible."

"Dat's right, marsa, I's do me bes, sah. Thankee."

In her deep sorrow the widow of Colonel Silveston looked upon that long wearisome journey to England as a means only by which an irksome task might be accomplished; it was of necessity a sad time for them all, but Ronla, never having been far from her native city, could not fail to be interested and more keenly alive to all that was passing around her as the steamer prodded its way through the Arabian, Red and Mediterranean Seas. Despite the pleasure that the

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varied scenery afforded her, she found it to be quite a difficult task to keep inviolate her promise to her grandfather, especially when her mother was further weakened by sea-sickness and seemingly lost all desire to live. One morning in sheer desperation Aunt Ruthie suggested hiring one of the deck hands to carry her mistress to the upper deck. It was a happy thought, and that evening the old nurse's face beamed with pleasure when her young mistress too noted the beneficial effect of the change and complimented her upon her wise suggestion.

The Colonel's daughter was certainly amazed when the old auntie remarked, "Yass! Thankee, Leetle Missie," then added emphatically, "King Solomon hain't de only wise man."

"Is his compeer alive today?"

"I specs he is, Missie Ronla. I hain't heerd on Marsa Gustus passin' ovah de brack Jordan yet."

"Why! mammy, you only met Mr. Augustus the day we sailed. Since when have you become expert in reading character at a single glance?"

The old auntie nodded her head knowingly and answered, smiling, "Cose, Leetle Missie, he sez." Then when the young listener's curiosity was thoroughly aroused, she added, mysteriously, "Laws, Missie Ronla, doan't ax me ter sez no mo' or Marsa Gustus' sun goddess might nebber smile agin."

Ronla Silveston appeared quite light-hearted when she sought her couch, even though Aunt Ruthie refused to vouchsafe further information that night.

The Colonel's daughter was also thankful her mother seemed brighter and delighted to see her

smiling when she remarked, "Don't you dare to talk in your sleep tonight, mammy, or I'll learn all your fine state secrets."

"I's not afeerd, Missie Ronla." The old auntie gave a low chuckling laugh when her young mistress said in tones bubbling over with mirth and affection, "Listen! momsey, dear, I must warn you before you go to sleep, to keep a sharp lookout after mammy." Then pretending to be greatly shocked, she added in a half whisper, "I just learned that your trusted nurse, the sun goddess and Mr. Augustus are rank conspirators."

Mrs. Silveston laughed when Aunt Ruthie exclaimed, "Sakes alive! Honey—noboddies nebber 'liebes a t'ing—w'en peoples do talks in dar sleep—suah dey doan't."

Ronla stooped over to kiss her mother good-night and said, smiling, "Do not believe a word that wicked conspirator says." Then added tenderly, "Sweet dreams, mother. Grandpa would say, 'May the grace of heaven enwheel thee around,' and keep thee from false conspirators."

"Amen" was reverently spoken, then the old auntie added, chuckling, "Bress yo', honey, hain't hit 'mazin' quar how powerful eddefin' Miss Ronla kin talk when she be asleep."

"Hush, mammy, not another word, yo' honey-chile will not talk eddefying tomorrow if you keep her up all night."

Mrs. Silveston smiled when her old nurse muttered, "I'll not spoke on a nuther word, honey, fer dey sez hit am a monstrous bad t'ing ter agavate folkses when dey be talkin' in dar sleep."

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The next evening the little party of exiles were tempted to forsake their stateroom, it was such a hot, sultry night, but, knowing that they would be disturbed before sunrise, when the decks were cleaned, they went below at midnight.

Many blanketed forms of the male passengers were strewn upon the decks that night and they were initiated into the mysteries concerning the downy softness of the poor Hindoo sailor's bed.

After a restless night the exiles were dressed before six and repaired at once to the upper deck. Ronla was glad that the heat had driven them from their berth when she found that they were nearing Aden, the gateway between the Red Sea and Indian Ocean.

The invalid, resting in a steamer chair, opened her eyes when her daughter remarked, "Yonder cliffs were thrown up in volcanic times." The speaker did not further bother her mother. The sea was rough and uncomfortable, consequently it was not to be wondered at that the sad invalid was not especially interested in Mother England's dealings with her Asiatic possessions. Aunt Ruthie looked rather solemn and her honey-child pale and wan looking. Ronla being in a measure deserted, ever and anon perused the Guide Book and among other things read ere they made a landing, "England's forces the natives to pay heavy tribute for all ships over a certain number of pounds. This tribute adds to the revenue of Aden, making yonder fort self-supporting and gives the British lion a chance to keep close watch over the happenings of the English waters. This is truly the real reason, even though the bulky document reads a clean bill of health."

Aunt Ruthie was quite herself again when they neared Suez and went into raptures when she beheld where Moses crossed the Red Sea and Miriam led her maidens out with timbrels and dances.

The old auntie was well versed in the Scriptures and at one certain spot softly muttered, "Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously. The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea." As a climax to snatches of Miriam the Prophetess' song Mrs. Silveston reverently added, "And the Lord shall reign forever and ever."

The caravans, donkeys, camels, dromedaries, bazaars, and bedouin camps at Suez failed to arouse the old colored mammy to the height of ecstasy as the region round about Mt. Sinai. While beholding the sacred mount, Aunt Ruthie in a rapt manner listened attentively while her young mistress read from the "grand old book" a description of how the people trembled at the sound of the trumpets, the thunder and lightning and also how smoke ascended, like a furnace, when the Almighty God answered his servant Moses.

The little party gazed in awed silence when Ronla finished reading. Later picking up her good friend the Guide Book, she remarked, "Mother, many pilgrimages are made today to that monastery at the base of Mt. Sinai; it is also stated that the geographical surroundings of the sacred mount agree perfectly with the Bible description."

"Yes, child, the sand, skies and hills form a wonderful picture. Is it not beautiful, mammy?"

"Yass! suah hit am, honey. I's so happified dat I feels lik' shoutin', Let dis ole auntie 'part in peace."

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"What, mammy! Would you leave us alone?"

"Cou'se not, honey, whar yo' git sech nonsensical idee? Laws! me ole marsa wo'd riz suah if I acks dat-a-way." Then, she added quite soberly, "I shall allus be powerful glad dat I seed dat sac'ed moun-tin'. Yass! allus, honey, bress yo'."

The Indian maiden's "Prince Incog" must have powerful influence at the court of King Neptune, for thus far the little party of exiles had not yet encountered any very serious storms. Aunt Ruthie was standing beside her young mistress when they were opposite the world-renowned fortress of Gibraltar. Turning to face Tangiers, the white city of the straits, she remarked, "In a few hours, mammy, we might go back a thousand years. Travelers inform us that Morocco over yonder is one of the strangest, most inaccessible and most mysterious lands that border the Mediterranean."

Ronla smiled when Aunt Ruthie answered, "Sakes alive! Leetle Missie, dar's troubl's nuff in dis life widout huntin' fur em; yo' nuss no noshuns ter gwine ovah dat-a-way. Laws no!"

"I am not anxious either, mammy." Glancing at the Guide Book, "I must not forget to tell mother that a Portuguese princess, Catarina of Braganza, brought as a dower to Charles the Second the then unimportant pieces of real estate, Tangiers and the Island of Bombay."

"Bomby," exclaimed Aunt Ruthie.

"Yes, Bombay; but in sheer stupidity the English allowed Tangiers to revert to barbarism. Had they kept it they would have had absolute control of these

Straits today. Look, mammy, we are about to glide into the dear old Atlantic. The ancients would never have dared to venture past the Pillars of Hercules."

Pointing to the northwest, Aunt Ruthie joyously exclaimed, "Virginny is ovalh thar, Leetle Missie. I clar, I feels as ef Iz gittin' neah me old log cabins." Then she added, excitedly, "Look, Leetle Missie; we am headin' now ter de no'th pole. Sakes alive! doan't be afeerd, fer Mudder Englan's gwinter grab us afore we gits ter 'dem skeery icybergs—suah she am."

Aunt Ruthie's speechifyin' usually amused her young mistress, but now she answered, dismally, "For your honey-child's sake I shall be glad when she folds us in her motherly arms." Adding tremulously, "I never thought we would journey to father's native land without him or dear grandfather." Tears glistened in the speaker's eyes when she further remarked, "I am so glad Auntie Roland promised to lay a few blossoms near the cross, it will—not feel so—lonely—now."

Aunt Ruthie quickly brushed away a tear and said almost brusquely, "Come Missie Ronla, we better not leab me honey-chile 'lone no mo'." They found the Colonel's "Ruby" leaning back in her chair in a most listless attitude, one glance was enough for her faithful nurse, who remarked pleadingly in hushed tones, "'Member, Leetle Missie, you giped your word." The old auntie need not have been so alarmed; she sank into her chair with a sigh of relief when she heard her young mistress in cheeriest voice remark:

"Mammy informed me that she had no desire to go over to Morocco, the land of no roads and many mysteries." Laughing, she added, "Did you know you were on the way to the Arctic regions?" Mrs. Silveston smiled when her daughter added, "Mammy says you must not be scared if some day you feel a sudden lurch. You know she always tells the truth."

Aunt Ruthie chuckled contentedly when her honey-child answered emphatically, "I certainly do, child."

Ronla smiled too, then said soberly, "Mammy swears that Mother England will surely grab us before we come to any pesky icebergs." Laughing, she added, "And she declares too 'that Virginny is just over there and she feels quite at home now.'"

The sad widow gazed in the direction indicated. Not receiving any reply the speaker leaned over toward her mother and remarked anxiously, "You do not regret having decided to come to England first, mother?"

"No, child. My old home is in ruins; some quiet nook is all I ask or desire at present. I am truly thankful that we are nearing our journey's end." The speaker smiled when her daughter grasped her hand and further said, "The sooner Mother England makes the grab the more delighted I shall be."

Then when the speaker added, sadly, "If only your father were—" All smiles fled from the merry mimic's face and she rose hastily, remarking, pleadingly, "Come, mother, walk a while, you have not moved from your chair all day. Ah, momsey, you will not dare to disobey me now, here comes the Captain." Aunt Ruthie rose to assist her honey-

child and the speaker added, "I know he will champion my cause."

"Suah he will, Lettle Missie," answered the old auntie, then turning toward her mistress added, mischievously, "Laws! ef dat Lonegrinny Marsa didn't comb ter 'liver us som'times, honey, we nebber could stan' hit, fer Lettle Missie gittin mo' strepterus ebry day."

The Captain laughed when the Colonel's daughter said, smiling, "Sir Knight, your arrival is most opportune. Aunt Ruthie has deserted me for the ranks of my enemy."

"Horros! has my good ship been harboring a traitor?"

The old auntie's face beamed with joy when her mistress graciously said, "I will act as sponsor for this traitor."

The Captain being thus relieved of all responsibility in the matter, passed on and mounted the step to "the bridge" to note if there were lurking near any traitors, in wind and wave, to jeopardize the lives of the exiles.

Prayers, too, emanating from a certain Indian mission followed the sad travelers and before they arrived in England Mrs. Roland indited a letter to her far-away friends, whose departure had caused her much regret and a few homesick feelings as well. A simple kindly service for the exiles might yet be performed; surely it was no herculean task to gather and place a few blossoms at the foot of a cross, whereon, beneath the names and dates, are engraved the words "Faithful Unto Death." Ah! though hedged

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in on every side by heathen darkness Colonel Silveston and Dr. da Spaniola had been accorded a Christian burial, their bodies were neither cremated nor carried to the high Towers of Silence, but were quietly resting beneath the symbol for which many in the past ages had fought and died.

No wonder that Mrs. Roland's heart bubbled over with joy when she learned of the generosity of Mr. Knowlton and his nephew and knew that a long-felt need of Dr. da Spaniola and her husband could now be realized. Before the two Englishmen left Bombay the foundations of the bungalow were finished and at the laying of the corner-stone Mr. Augustus named the building Samaritan Hospital, in honor of one who had saved a life by the wayside and had also given gratuitously many years of service at that little English mission.

Dr. Roland had the text, "My grace is sufficient for thee," placed over the doorway leading into the operating room, and above the mantel in the waiting room was hung a large picture of the good Samaritan stooping to lift his wounded brother on a mule. Upon a brass plate was inscribed, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Mrs. Roland also described the plans for the new building and its situation. Tears dimmed her eyes when she penned the words, "Beside the pathway leading to the new bungalow stands a marble cross. An English officer and an American surgeon now bear silent testimony to the truth that Christianity, even in the darkest of heathen lands, leads the way to schools, hospitals and higher civilization.

"Give my love to my little sunbeam (big would perhaps be more truthful) and tell her if any of her new friends flippantly assert that they do not believe in Foreign Missions, not to be surprised. Well! 'knowledge is power.' Perhaps a few questions tactfully given might change their view-point. Who knows? Any way it cannot do much harm to inquire, saying, 'What knowledge had they of the condition of the heathen?'

"Could they conceive of a life without churches, schools and hospitals?

"Did they realize that England and America were once heathen lands?

"Why did the early fathers of the church bother sending missionaries?

"Who commanded, saying 'Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature?'

"Does our Lord and Master speak the truth or a lie?

"Ah, Patricia, I know you saw enough of the misery and degradation of the child-widows and poor down-trodden heathen women, while living in Bombay, to know what the uplifting, purifying and refining power of the Gospel has done in India and is doing in the world at large today. Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord. Yes! sweet friend, I feel assured if the loved ones beneath that cross could speak, they would answer exultantly, 'Amen and Amen.'"

CHAPTER VII

A GRAB AND EXILESNEST

IN the seclusion of the cabin occupied by the Indian exiles, a council of war was held. The main object of the unexpected session was namely the desire to allay the nervous fears of the Colonel's widow concerning the possible appearance of Jess Smithers when they landed in England.

Aunt Ruthie, as usual, was awarded the rôle of martyr, voting that she lay aside the insignia of her rank and go ashore bonneted and swathed in a long crêpe veil. Despite her honey-child's perplexed and anxious fears, she smiled when Aunt Ruthie in shocked, incredulous tones exclaimed, "Lawd ha' mussy! Oh! Honey, does yo' rarely means dat yo' ole nuss hab ter sneakes 'long, lik dem prison-burds, atar yo' leab?"

"Yes, mammy."

"An nebber spoke on a word 'till we gits ter Texie, honey?"

"It seems the wisest plan, mammy."

Aunt Ruthie sighed heavily and with most woe-begone expression muttered, "Den, honey, w'en me family 'sake me, dis 'ole auntie jes' bettah slip ovah altergidder dat planky-bo'rd. Hain't——"

"If you desert us, mammy," hastily said Mrs. Silveston on the verge of tears, "then we had better all slip over together, Ronla."

"Nonsense, mother," remarked the Colonel's daughter rather curtly. Then turning to address Aunt Ruthie she further said, smiling, "Cheer up, mammy, I do not believe Jess is in England anyhow. There now! the fiat has gone forth. Listen; you need not don the disguise when it makes you so unhappy."

The kindly words caused the clouds to disappear like magic and the old frightened auntie answered, beaming and chuckling, "Fo' de lan' sake! miss a chance ter be a spankin' fine lady! Leetle Missie, w'at yo' talkin' 'bout? Wales, Ha! Ha! Ha! Laws, wales gib a pussun sech a sanctimonified air." Then stooping to grasp the sad widow's hand, she said with a touch of pathos in her voice, "Sake alive! dat wuz a skeery feelin', honey. Yass! suah hit wuz. Laws! de cockles ob dis ole h'art git flustery lik', eben ter t'ink ob pretencing not ter 'longs ter de ole marsa's bressed fambly."

Notwithstanding Aunt Ruthie's numerous perturbations in reference to her proposed mission, she heroically sallied forth from the cabin in advance of the others to await their coming on deck and later, at a safe distance, followed the sable-gowned exiles over the disputed gang-plank.

The long, wearisome voyage from India was a thing of the past. The Colonel's daughter thought, as she slipped her feet on terra-firma, that Mr. Augustus' epistle must have been favorably received, then remarked aloud, "Thanks, Mr. Sea King, for landing us safely." Guiding her mother through the crowd she added, "Come! over yonder is the waiting train. Do not hurry, we have plenty of time." With arm

protectingly within the timid, shrinking figure at her side the speaker glanced back, remarking, smiling, "All's well! Fair Nubia has not lost the trail; she is marching majestically forward." Later placing a hat box and umbrellas on the platform, she commanded, "Please remain here a moment until I purchase the tickets; nothing can happen, our rear-guard will protect you until I return."

The exiles found that another change of trains and a short wait were necessary ere they could arrive at their destination. When nearing their journey's end Mrs. Silveston looked puzzled when her daughter remarked, mischievously, "Richard is himself again." The weary invalid's face lighted up with pleasure when, following the speaker's glance, she beheld Aunt Ruthie resplendent in all the pristine glory of her class, even though at that moment she was occupied crushing with seeming vehemence her troublesome *bête noir* into a bag, without the slightest regard of the value of the "bonnet and wale." At this juncture the conductor held open the door and shouted, "Texum! Next stop, Texum."

Aunt Ruthie gathered her budgets and marched forward like a conquering hero to care for her honey-child. Thus relieved, her young mistress picked up the hat box and umbrellas and marched toward the door. When she alighted she found a porter on the lookout for stray passengers. With a grin of welcome Sam, the boots, advanced, saying, "The Blossoms, miss?"

The Colonel's daughter remembered that Dr. Roland suggested their going to this hotel, so with

quite a happy homey feeling she forthwith handed Sam the checks for their luggage and then entering the coach remarked, "Is it a long ride to The Blossoms?"

"No, miss, honly 'bout six squares hoff."

The exiles had time to take a cursory glance around them. Aunt Ruthie made the driver smile when she exclaimed excitedly, "Fo 'de lan' sake! chile, look at de buful grass an' flowers. I clar, Marsa Sun doan't frizzle ebryt'ing 'round heah, honey."

Aunt Ruthie was so engrossed with the beauties of their new environment that she was entirely oblivious of the movements of the stalwart porter, consequently she started, exclaiming, "Oh! Lawd," when a heavy thud was suddenly heard overhead. Mrs. Silveston could not forbear smiling while her daughter laughingly remarked, "Jumbo is so happy to be out of the hold, he is just a little frisky. Don't be frightened, mammy, here comes the station master with his American twin." A smaller trunk and a leather one used in the cabin followed the others, causing more rumbling overhead. All the luggage of the travelers being accounted for and deposited within or on top of the coach, Sam shut the door with a snap and climbed to the seat beside the driver. The trusty horses jogged slowly along with their heavy burden before they came to the quaint old town, Mrs. Silveston remarked, "Oh! how lovely it seems to see some green again, after so many weeks of nothing but water and sky."

"Yes, it was rather monotonous at times. Oh!

look at the flowers in the cottage windows, mother. This country is not like India—'hard, baked and brown,' mammy."

"Dat's right, Leetle Missie, yo' ole nuss b'en mummified herself ef she libed thar much longer, and dat hain't no joke nuther."

Laughing, Ronla remarked, "We'll soon be home now, mother. My! I have a famous appetite already for some of those Southdown mutton chops and deep fruit pasties." Turning to Aunt Ruthie she further said, banteringly, "Behold a true daughter of the army—no 'life on the ocean wave for me.' Ah! Here we are at last. What an ideal resting place!" While the coach was being backed to the curb she further remarked, "Look at the high hedges and grand old trees, mother."

Later, Aunt Ruthie marched up the path a few paces behind her honey-child. The arrival of the Indian exiles caused somewhat of a flutter among the servants and onlookers, as mammies of the Southern type were not every-day visitors of the famous old hostelry.

The Colonel's daughter was delighted with their dainty curtained apartment and remarked, when alone, "Welcome to 'The Blossoms,' mother."

"Amen," muttered the old auntie, after which the speaker continued, saying, "Mother, you must rest a while before dinner."

Mrs. Silveston smiled when Aunt Ruthie exclaimed, "Bress yo', Missie Ronlah, dey am som' sense te sech kind ob speechifyin, so dar is. Clar ter goodness! Honey, dem burds jes seemed ter be singin' as we druv

'long, 'Hearken ter our praises—as we homeward moves.'"

Mrs. Silveston falteringly said, "Is there grief, or sadness?"

Ronla quickly quoted, "Clouds are not from thee, O Thou God of love." Then kissing her mother, she added, playfully, "Those birds were regular missionaries, mammy, when they said, 'On our way rejoicing gladly let us go.' Hark! Five o'clock."

"Then, daughter, it is too late for you to go on a voyage of discovery today."

"Laws, honey, doan't bodder 'bout nuffin. I clar, when I move dese contrapshuns out de way, yo' nuss gwine ter fix yo' comfy. Fo' de lan' sake', hark!"

Laughing, Ronla said, "Jumbo and his twin are coming."

"Bress yo', Leetle Missie, we'll be home afore we knows hit. Yass—(opening the door) de helephants am comin', suah——"

"Bring only the steamer trunk in the room, mammy."

"Lan' sake, honey, I's tend ter hit. Laws! doan't yo' be anxified 'bout nuffin."

The exiles found the proprietor of the inn to be most gracious and obliging, so the elephants guarded their doorway, while the landlord's wife, rosy-cheeked daughter and Sam, the boots, vied with each other in trying to give satisfaction, not only on their arrival but as long as they remained at "The Blossoms." Aunt Ruthie, too, was awarded the special favor of carrying meals to the room at her mistress' pleasure.

At the end of the second sleeping floor, near their rooms, was a veranda overlooking the back gardens—fortunately it was perched too high to attract the notice of the other guests, therefore the invalid enjoyed the seclusion of the cozy nook immensely. The landlord and family were at times beset with inquisitive questions, to which they frankly replied, “The young lady is in mourning for her grandfather, who was an American surgeon. As her widowed mother is quite an invalid, they expect to remain a while in England before sailing for their native land—” Thus a touch of sympathy disarmed gossiping tongues and the Indian exiles came and went unmolested. Aunt Ruthie had been trained by the old planter to be courteous, but still discreet, therefore even she piloted her way unharmed through the pitfalls placed for her undoing down in the servants’ hall.

The next morning Sam acted as guide for the strangers and at his command the driver drew in the horses at a certain cottage in the adjoining village. The Colonel’s daughter and Fair Nubia alighted from the coach; they found the agent most courteous and were delighted to learn that he had a cottage that he thought would give satisfaction if a climb up the hill would be no detriment. Being informed that an elevated site would be rather an advantage than otherwise, the agent picked up his hat and the party left the cottage. The coach was nowhere in sight when they commenced their march through the village. Fortunately for mammy the ascent was gradual. Ronla, too, noted with pleasure the several

breaks in the journey, as the road wound its way around the hillside toward the summit. From various view-points the long drawn-out straggling village of Haroldean looked exceedingly attractive that morning and Aunt Ruthie's young mistress was more pleased than appalled by the quiet exclusiveness of that picturesque village, with its unpretentious homes, the combined post-office and country store, tiny chapel and school-house. Later, ascending the hill, they passed Dr. Mallin's beautiful villa, the gray stone church and rectory. About a half a square beyond the agent halted, opened a wooden gate and stepped aside to allow his companions to enter. Loitering on the porch a moment, the agent glanced at his timepiece and said, "Just eight minutes' climb from the post-office. I 'ope you're not tired, miss."

"I have enjoyed the walk, thank you. Did Dr. Roland notify you of our coming?"

"No, miss." Mastering a refractory lock the agent added, "Walk right in; we will go hupstairs first, please."

Aunt Ruthie followed in silence, but her beaming countenance expressed her delight as they roamed over the little place. Finding the house in such perfect repair was a bewildering surprise, an enigma her young mistress failed to solve when she thought of the small sum named at the agent's office.

On their return their guide called Ronla's attention to the steepness of the hillside. After passing their tiny gate the strangers noted the high iron gates where the road seemingly came to an abrupt end. Turning to start on their homeward journey the agent

remarked, obsequiously, as if informing them of a matter of high importance, "Up yonder is the hentrance to Lord 'aroldean's hestate, miss. Mrs. 'ewlson, the housekeeper, saves the 'ouse from being carried hoff by spooks or bats."

The young house-renter made not the slightest comment on the knowledge vouchsafed her, but instead inquired where they could procure the needed furnishings for the cottage.

The agent muttered after the departure of the coach, "A rum lass! Why most women-folks pester me life hout 'bout 'aroldean 'all. Guess she hain't hany relation of Mother Eve. Fancy! but she was swagger. I reckon the hul village 'll be 'piscopals fer a few Sundays. Ha! Ha!"

If the Colonel's daughter exhibited no interest especially in her new neighbors, their coming was not unnoticed, for her dusky companion set the whole village agog and the agent was sorry that he had missed an opportunity to learn somewhat of the family, especially so when later deluged with the questions, "Who are they? Where did they come from?"

"Mr. Netherly 'anded me 'e hinstructions and bespoke the 'ouse," answered the agent quite chagrined, but, not to be entirely undone, he artfully saved what the Chinese call their "face," and in conclusion remarked, "Fancy me spiling me reputation by hasking questions." This speech called forth silent contempt or laughter, it being a well-known fact that the speaker was never more happy than when he could keep his auditors spell-

bound as he regaled them with some choice, rare tid-bit of gossip news. With all his realistic touches the agent could not bamboozle the old shoemaker, who was quite a character in his way. He drolly remarked in his shop one day, "Boys, I allus take what 'e hagent says with a pinch of salt. Ha! Ha! and it needs a big one sometimes to digest some of his yarns, 'bout them ar' spooky doin's at 'aroldean 'all—don't let 'im gull yere, boys."

Fortunately for the Indian exiles, the agent's business methods were never questioned, therefore the morning's transactions of Aunt Ruthie's young mistress were perfectly safe.

The birds were singing another pæan of praise and the field flowers nodding a response in the soft balmy breeze as night and morning sped on their homeward way. After alighting from the coach Ronla hurried quickly to her mother's room and joyfully exclaimed when stooping to kiss her, "Oh, mother, here are the keys and receipt for first quarter's rent! We have the sweetest white cottage. There are several fine old trees in the tiny gardens and a high hedge makes it quite secluded——"

"Clar ter goodness, Missie Ronlah. am yo' gwine ter spile me honey-chile's s'prise."

"No indeed, mammy, I wouldn't do so for worlds. Now, momsey, see what a tyrant your old nurse has become."

Mrs. Silveston smiled as she gazed into the old dusky face and said, "You know! I wish there were more such tyrants." Then turning toward her daughter added, "I suppose your next tour will be

to select the furniture?" Aunt Ruthie chuckled when her new mistress held up her hands and exclaimed, "Horrors, mother, you will bring me into trouble yet." Then added quite soberly, "The tyrant wills that you must be patient like a good child; you know good fairies never disclose their plans until their queen waves her wand. Were you dreadfully lonely this morning?"

"Nonsense, child, do not bother about me. I managed beautifully; by the way, Jane can assist mammy with the cleaning."

"Good, we will need Jane on Friday if all goes well. My! momsey, I am so happy everything is turning out so well. We will investigate some of the Texum shops while you rest this afternoon—not being endowed with the wisdom of Solomon, Aunt Ruthie must finance this end of the business."

"Laws, chile, yo' ole nuss jes lik' dem japanny monkey-fellahs. Fo' de lan' sake! doan't yo' 'lieb sech nonsensical speechfyin', honey."

Ronla laughed, then said earnestly, "Aunt Ruthie shall hold the purse; we will not go in debt if we have to sit on the floor and eat Japanese fashion. We might learn to eat rice with chopsticks and cook rice cakes on a tiny hibachi. Grandfather told me that debt was like a millstone around one's neck." Noticing her mother's troubled countenance she quickly added, "Aunt Ruthie has a wonderful forte for managin' on a little, so I promise you a bed and a few chairs and—Oh! think of the comforts stowed away in our luggage, that will add a dear familiar touch to our new home." A touch of pathos entered

the speaker's voice when she further remarked, "We will not be discontented while we have each other, will we, mother?"

Aunt Ruthie turned away to hide a mistiness in her eyes when her honey-child answered, tremulously, "Indeed we will not, darling. My good fairies are such a blessing—" Then added, smiling, "We can be as happy in a cottage as a palace. I am willing to live on a crust rather than have Aunt Ruthie worried and harassed over debts."

Ronla laughed quite heartily when Aunt Ruthie exclaimed, "Bress de Lawd! me ole marsa in Virginny, Leetle Missie, would sez Amen ter sech sent'ments. No! yo' needent stan' dar laughin', Missie Ronla, fer yo' gran'fadder allus sez blood wo'd tell. Laws! sojers shut hup in de forts de hul time mounts ter nuffin, jes nuffin."

"Then, mammy, I must be among those who amount to nothing."

"Sakes alive, honey, dem sojer boys dat stays by de stuff am jes as powerful brave. Laws, chile, w'at yo' t'inkin' 'bout talkin' dat-a-way."

Tears were in Ronla's eyes, but she exclaimed cheerfully, "If our rear-guard deserts us, we give up the battle altogether, wouldn't we, mammy?"

A knock on the door prevented Aunt Ruthie making a reply.

Mrs. Silveston would be denied luxuries to which she had been accustomed since her birth. Certainly her new environment would be a marked change from their life in India, but the dear ones were too truly missed to leave in her heart the desire for the

more exciting pleasures of a big metropolis like London. Spartan-like, Ronla determined not to mope no matter how uneventful her life might be. She was delighted with her new home, being confident that had they hunted the length and breadth of England they could not have found another better suited to their needs and present state of their finances.

Ronla strolled out to the veranda for a breath of air before retiring and when she closed the door Aunt Ruthie laughed, then said, "Lan' sake, honey, Missie Ronla jes handled dat speechifyin' dis marnin' in de most jurified way. Laws me, chile, a pussun might t'ink she'd be'n rentin' kotteges ebry day." The brush and comb had a rest when she added, "Fo' de lan' sake, honey, oncet I jes' hab ter turn an' look hout de winder. Laws! hit struck me comical bone ter heah de chile. An' I neahly losed me self-specs by laughin'." The old auntie further remarked mysteriously, "Som' time I's afeerd, eber sense de Kulnel gib her dat dimind she gittin' mo' buful an' wise. Bress her! Laws dem diminds."

"Hush, mammy, do not speak of diamonds."

"Sakes alive! Why not, honey?"

"Because jewels and fine clothes can have no part in our simple mode of living. Do not forget we are only plain country people now."

"Laws! doan't luk skeered, honey, I's nebber breave on a word."

"Thank you, mammy, it would be unwise and not safe for any one to know that we had costly gems in our possession."

Aunt Ruthie answered in half whisper, "I'll be

karful, honey; dis ole nuss hain't hankerin' ter fisty-cuff wid any pesky robbers—guess not, dar comp'ny hain't eddifyin on a dark ebin. Laws no! I nebber spoke on dem shiny t'ings agin—I swar by dem japanny monkeys.”

Laughing, Mrs. Silveston answered, “I can trust you even if your mouth, ears and eyes are uncovered; do not forget that now I am a poor widow, the happy past we must keep sacred to ourselves. I am glad the cottage stands alone. The hedges——”

“Who has been telling secrets now?”

“Fo’ de lan’ sake! Miss Ronla—see—me mouff am shet laike a clam—dis ole nuss nebber knows nuffin, do I, honey?”

Laughing, Mrs. Silveston answered, “I can swear, Ronla, Aunt Ruthie has a good forgettery; she never knows ‘nuthin’, if she does not wish to.”

“Dat’s right, honey, thankee. Good night.”

Later, the sad widow remarked, “Aunt Ruthie was talking about diamonds while you were away, so I warned her not to speak of our past or of our having anything of value in our luggage.”

Ronla laughed as she crept into bed when her mother added jestingly, “Have no fears, dear, she promised to obey. Good night!”

Aunt Ruthie must have been deeply impressed by the graveness of the warning, for she dreamed that she beheld her honey-child sitting up in bed, looking in bewildering horror upon a magnificent solitaire diamond ring which her young mistress had placed in her hand. The next morning the old auntie really looked quite troubled when her young mistress

laughingly remarked, "Great minds run in the same channel— My! mammy, I was chasing diamonds all night myself. Now I know I am doomed to spinsterhood, mother, for try as I would I could not catch a single ring."

In hushed tones the old auntie remarked, "Dis hain't no joke, honey, sake alive! yo' needn't be laughin', Leetle Missie, dat ring am gwinter 'witch us yit, honey."

"Nonsense, mammy, it was only a dream."

"Nebber mind if hit wuz. I clar dat Injin might ha' powwowed hit. Fo' de lan' sake!" Aunt Ruthie added in awed whisper, "I kin seed yo' skeerd eyes yit, honey."

"Dreams mean nothing, mammy."

"You are right, mother, I have only feelings of the deepest gratitude to the kind Princess."

"True, daughter. Why, mammy, are we not in the All Father's keeping?"

"Bress de Lawd! suah we is, honey. Laws, dreams mustn't spile yo' brekfust, chile, dem muffins am gittin' cole."

"Yes, mother, hurry; we want to start early this morning."

Later, when out on another voyage of discovery among the shops, the speaker remarked, "The price of rental puzzles me. It seems so extremely low for that cottage." Adding as if truly perplexed, "The refined taste displayed in the wall papers and painting is another enigma. I will not bother mother about it, but it seems queer, especially as the agent declared Dr. Roland never wrote of our coming."

"Lan' sake! Leetle Missie, doan't git dem puckers jes' 'bout dem skeery hows. Laws, jes' be t'ankful dat yo' mudder gwine ter hab sech a comfy home 'till we gwine ter de ole plantashun."

"Are you homesick, mammy?"

"Not 'xactly, Leetle Missie, but hit makes me bile ovah w'en I t'ink how yo' fadder's pompey lawd folkses treated me bressed honey-chile."

"We can get along finely without their assistance. I am glad I do not have to work, but I declare I would seek employment in a Texum factory before I would ask alms."

The Colonel's daughter smiled when Aunt Ruthie said haughtily, "Fo' de lan' sake! Wurk! Leetle Missie." Looking very determined she added, "Me ole marsa's gran'darter hab no 'casion ter beg while dars bref in me ole bones—nor wurk nuther. Laws! Missie Ronla, I spouses dem pompey lawds t'ink me bressed honey-chile jes som' hathen injin dat hain't no lady. I clar, dat's w'at makes me bile ovah."

Smiling, Ronla said gleefully, "Do be careful, mammy, I have always heard that boils were painful affairs, and I know I could never nurse you if you allowed them to 'bile ovah.'" The speaker hastily added in kindly tone, "Mother and your Injin child are not troubling about 'pompey lawds' as long as you are here to pilot our ship of state. Here is the shop, some one else had better smooth out the puckers or the salesperson may be afraid of you, mammy."

"Laws! I's not afeerd, Leetle Missie, dey nebber looks at black ston's when sparklin' shiny ones am neah."

Aunt Ruthie walked sedately back of her young mistress when she entered the shop and at her command was soon engrossed choosing the utensils to furnish her own special domain.

Aunt Ruthie's severe criticism about the road, the morning that the coach gave a dreadful lurch and nearly deposited Jumbo and his twin in the mud, caused Jane to do some thinking and talking when she returned that night to "The Blossoms." En route, also, that Friday morning Ronla said, "Jane, do you think that we will be bothered with tramps in our new home?"

The comely English maiden smiled reassuringly, "I 'ave never 'eard of any one being bothered with them, Miss Silveston, but Mr. Netherly and the Doctor can tell you better?"

"Thank you, Jane, your word will be sufficient."

The readers have discovered, no doubt, that the speaker is rather inclined to be demonstrative—this characteristic was never apparent to strangers and on first acquaintance one would rather adjudge the Indian maiden to be cold and unapproachable. That morning when arranging the furniture Jane had a new insight into her guest's make-up, for she seemed like a child over a new toy and at this stage of the proceedings Aunt Ruthie was glad to accept the benefit of her superior artistic taste.

Jane, the spinster, had never known anything but abject obedience to the will of her parents since her early childhood days, consequently, like Ben Hur in the hold of the galley, in the most stoical manner she endured hard work with little or no sympathy or

love. Consequently, that day at Exilesnest was a revelation to her when she heard, continually, such expressions as these, "Clar ter goodness, Missie Ronla, doan't dat look scrumpterus? I clar, dis lib'y gwine ter please me honey-chile. Bress her," or "Come quickly, mammy, do you think momsey dear would like the way I have arranged this room or do you think it would look better some other way?"

"Laws! Missie Ronla, dis ole auntie knows nuffin' 'bout sech t'ings." There were merry twinkles in her eye when she remarked as she stood with arms akimbo to view the handiwork of her young mistress, "I clar, dis ole nuss hab no fine eddecashun in sech t'ings, but, lan' sakes! I kin prognosticate anyt'ing yo' does, Leettle Missie, am powerful suah ter be putty right in me honey-chile's eyes. Yes, suah, sech spiling I nebber seed."

Jane found herself smiling when she heard Aunt Ruthie's low chuckling laugh and really stopped scrubbing a moment when she conceived the audacious idea of what her mother would do if she attempted to kiss her and call her "momsey dear." Then concluding that scrubbing would be far easier to perform than that daring feat, she again settled herself at her work.

The next morning Sam drove Jane and Aunt Ruthie over to the cottage. En route, Jane alighted at the village store and following in her wake on her return was a boy carrying a box of groceries and marketing that were ordered the following evening.

At five o'clock she threw open the cottage door and with arms outstretched rushed forward to assist

her honey-child up the porch steps, exclaiming, "Lan' sakes, chile, I's b'en powerful anxified about yo', honey." Sam could not forbear grinning and winking at Jane when she added, anxiously, "I's afeerd sompin' upsot; dem roads so rickerty, Leetle Missie."

"Blame the naughty train, it was late this afternoon."

Jane was surprised to feel tears in her eyes, after she entered the omnibus; somehow, the loving greetings affected her strangely and for the first time in her life felt she rather forlorn and alone. Ere this comely English maiden had passed the church, Aunt Ruthie had gathered and placed last parcels in the entry. When closing the door a happy voice said, joyously, "Assist the mistress of Exilesnest to her room, mammy." Later mounting the straight narrow stairway she added, "Do you approve of the name, mother?"

"I'clar, Missie Ronla, jes' let yo' mudder gits her bref—dese stairs am skeery nuff ter contracts a saint widout boderin 'bout sech t'ing."

Laughing, a merry voice replied, "A word to the wise is sufficient." Oh! how comfy it seemed when the Indian maiden entered her own apartment and found her clothes resting as contentedly on the hooks as if they always belonged there. This room having no exit into the entry, when ready she walked into her mother's larger and attractive apartment. Later, during the triumphal march the sweet mistress found their bedrooms were over the library and dining room, while on the other side of the tiny straight entry,

over parlor and pantry, were Aunt Ruthie's small apartment, a tiny box of a sewing room and guest-chamber at the head of the stair—this room was sealed and silent because of lack of means to furnish it. Once again down the treacherous stairs, Mrs. Silveston passed through the library and dining room to pantry. The kitchen was apparently an after thought of the builder and was tacked on to the drawing-room side of the cottage. When stepping into this very important apartment a merry voice exclaimed, "Honored mistress, the queen of this domain bids you welcome, but be warned, never inquire too closely into the mysteries of this department if you desire to merit her good will or enjoy her concoctions. Oh! do you think we dare take a peep in the dresser?"

Auntie Ruthie proudly threw open the doors for inspection and remarked, smiling, "Hark at de chile, honey, hain't dat scand'lous. Laws, honey, w'at we gwine ter do?"

"Love will find a way, mammy." Then added tremulously, "Oh, how can I thank—" Slipping her arm around her mother's waist Ronla said coaxingly, "Come back to our spacious hall, we have another room to show you." Later, Aunt Ruthie threw open the drawing-room door ceremoniously and said, "Jes a peek, honey. I clar, hit wouldn't be rister-cratal widout a chill room—suah no."

Laughing, Ronla remarked, "We cannot afford to furnish our reception hall at present, fair mistress. Is it not a fine place for our stowaway trunks? Look! mammy will light that big stove when my lady hunts among her archives."

Auntie Ruthie passed on to the dining room, but could not refrain from laughing when her young mistress remarked, "Tomorrow I will show you my truck patch and large chicken coop in the back garden. Did you know your daughter was going to turn farmer and grow potatoes and eggs?"

Mrs. Silveston laughed and ha, ha was heard in the other room. Ronla tied on a dainty mull apron and, smiling, replied as she drew a roll of crocheted lace from one of the pockets, "Aunt Ruthie can laugh, even if I get slightly mixed at times; she will be proud of her farmer mistress yet."

Aunt Ruthie bustled about preparing the evening meal. Resting in the comfy window seat Ronla was rejoiced to behold the expression of peaceful content gradually settle down on the lovely face of the Colonel's Ruby. The looking back and the void in her mother's life would be impossible to fill, nevertheless, their precious friend, "Hope," had not deserted her and was then whispering, "Battle valiantly. There are many mansions; some day you will go to them."

The next morning the farmer mistress was called to the kitchen to settle some "streperus" person. On his departure mammy was called away to answer a knock on the front door; this time Missie Ronla's aid was not needed, it was only the rector of St. Jude's; he would not accept mammy's courteous invitation to enter, the object of his visit being only to notify the newcomers of his wife's willingness to serve them if they needed any neighborly assistance.

Ronla was out in the garden the following afternoon

viewing more closely the field of her future labors, when a lady opened the gate and with most bewitching smile remarked when walking forward with hand outstretched, "Pardon intrusion, but I am Mrs. Netherly."

"Miss Silveston is delighted to know Mrs. Netherly. Will you come into the library and meet mother?"

Laughing mischievously, answered the rector's wife, "I would not dare accept that pleasure today or I might arouse my husband's ire. We had arranged to call together, in search of good recruits for yonder church."

Smiling, Ronla said, "The word 'good' may not be a proper name for our family, but we hope to attend the Church of England services."

"I am delighted to hear it, our flock is small. Good-bye, Miss Silveston, I must away and tell our rector the good news."

"Good-bye, then, mother will be sitting in state, waiting callers any afternoon at five."

"Thank you, I will not forget." Ronla was delighted when Mrs. Netherly turned, shaking her hand cordially and said, "I am so glad you have moved near the rectory, I have been in sad need of a young friend since I came." Withdrawing her hand as if ashamed of her impulsiveness, added, "Good-bye, again; you will see our fairy coach and outriders ascending the hill some afternoon at five."

"You cannot arrive too soon for mother. Good-bye."

The speaker seemed rooted to the spot until Mrs. Netherly smiled adieu again as she closed the exiles'

gate, then walked hastily down the hill to her own attractive home. Entering a screen door on the side porch, Foxgrove's mistress crossed the hall. Opening another door, with happy, smiling face, she exclaimed, "Sir Priest, I have found several new recruits this morning."

Laughing, the rector of St. Jude's answered, "I suppose then you wish me to say, 'Many daughters have done virtuously but thou excellest them all.'" Quietly closing the door, the light-hearted intruder hastened over and seated herself on the arm of the speaker's chair. When a protecting arm held her safely Mrs. Netherly remarked, soberly, "Rolin, I delivered your message to Mrs. Binhurst, she was much brighter today. Poor shut-in! her eyes fairly shone when she beheld the jellies and fruit and really seemed to appreciate my bringing them."

"How strange!"

"Not another word or I will not tell you about my new recruits." The speaker laughed at the solemn expression assumed by her loving protector as he touched his lips to forswear silence, then added, gladly, "Our new neighbors are Church of England people." Mrs. Netherly could not repress a smile when her husband bent his head solemnly with lips tightly closed. Raising her hand warningly she further remarked, "Arriving at the rectory gate, I suddenly realized that a little further hill-climbing would be most beneficial. Passing yonder white cottage I noticed a tall young lady in the front garden." Nestling closer to her husband she spoke coaxingly, "You know, dear, I am never curious, but I thought

just an ordinary, casual glance would not be rude—" The room rang with Mr. Netherly's boyish, good-natured laughter. Picking up a brass paper cutter the speaker said, commandingly, "Silence, sir!" Order being restored the happy little wife added, "One look hypnotized me and drew me into the garden. The young lady seemed surprised, but, oh, Rolin, when she said, 'Miss Silveston is glad to know Mrs. Netherly,' her voice and beautiful smile truly captivated me and all the way home I felt glad that I had obliged the agent in choosing the papers for the cottage."

"Oh, sweetheart, so you learned today that the seeds of kindly acts do not breed loathsome flowers of despair in the giver's heart."

"Sir Priest, I see you have not learned your lesson to be silent yet. Oh, dear, Miss Silveston said her mother would be at home any afternoon at five. I can hardly wait. I met Donald. They leave for college Tuesday morning, so they are going with us on Saturday afternoon; now do not plan any meetings or funerals—Remember!" Winding an arm around her husband's neck she further spoke with a touch of pleading and pathos, "At last I believe I have found a sweet young chum. Are you not glad?"

Mr. Netherly looked troubled, answering anxiously, "Have you regretted, Nancy?"

The person addressed slipped off the arm of the chair, then stooping to kiss the speaker answered tenderly, "What a dear old goose it is." Then at the entrance stopped to add banteringly, "Foxgrove is the dearest home in the whole world. Shame on

you, Sir Priest! you know I was not 'borned and brung hup like the village hagent to manage fine hestates.'"

The youthful rector laughed at the saucy mimic and when alone an expression of happy content stole over his fine manly features when he settled himself to take up the threads of his discarded task.

The unexpected appearance of the rector's wife in Exilesnest garden caused another flutter of excitement when the young lady with hypnotic powers entered her mother's room and exclaimed joyously, "The daintiest little lady entered the gate when I was out in the front garden, you might have thought she was coming to a garden party she looked so lovely, but a little empty basket dispelled that illusion and I found out she was the wife of the rector of yonder church. I am afraid I may have looked annoyed at first, but her winsome cordial manner disarmed me and now I am delighted, she entered so informally. I never dreamed of the possibility of finding such a lovely friend so near at hand; she is not any older than I am if she is married." In sheer mischief she added, teasingly, "Maybe drawing me out in the garden was another conspiracy of the sun-goddess, eh, mammy?"

Aunt Ruthie chuckled, nodding her head mysteriously and smiling, her honey-child remarked, "Ruskin wrote—'Friendship is the nearest thing we know to religion.' I truly hope your expectations may be realized."

"Laws! yo' ole nuss ramify dem sentiments, honey."

Ronla smiled, then said, "Have the kettle sizzling by the hour of five, mammy; I told Mrs. Netherly your honey-child was always at home at that hour."

"Did yo' eber cotch 'Meriky nappin? dat pesky tea be riddy ter jump. Laws yass, honey! hain't hit quar how Mistah Tea nebber fergits de ways ob dair Bostin' pedagogy folks. Sakes alive! Leetle Missie, dat big splash was heerd way ovah heah, an dat warn't no joke nuther." Laughing, the person addressed answered, "We will never hear the dinner bell if we sit sewing any longer; hand over that curtain, mother, you have worked enough this morning."

Aunt Ruthie grinned and remarked as she left the apartment, "Bettah 'bey, honey, I'z terribl' afeerd w'en Missie Ronla talks dat-a-way."

"Do not worry, mammy, I will appease her wrath somehow." Smiling, Ronla seated herself in the chair vacated by the old auntie and while turning down curtain hems remarked, "Are clergymen so wealthy and exclusive in England as to travel in state? Mrs. Netherly spoke of their coach and outriders."

"Not in a country village, at least. Guess you will have to possess yourself in patience until they call. Mammy has never been balked by any obstacle yet, guess outriders nor coach either will appall her."

The "outriders" proved to be Dr. Mallin's two sons and no one was more in her element than Aunt Ruthie when she ceremoniously dispensed tea and jumbles to the honey-child's guests when they called the following Saturday. When rising to leave, Mrs. Netherly inquired animatedly, "Shall we have the pleasure of welcoming you to St. Jude's tomorrow?"

Glancing toward her mother, Ronla answered sadly, "I am afraid mother will not be equal to hill-climbing for some time."

"What about yourself!" Ronla hesitated, then the speaker impulsively grasped her new friend's hand saying, earnestly, "Come over to the rectory at quarter of eleven, if you care to venture alone. Please come. The rector's pew is dying of ennui lately."

"I am afraid ennui would turn into despair if such a somber individual as I am dare intrude."

"Honor, not intrude, Miss Silveston."

"I must admit I am too great a coward to have ventured alone. I appreciate your kindness very much, Mrs. Netherly, if mother can spare me, I will be glad to come, if you really think you are equal to bearing the brunt of the pew's anger when he sees your guest."

"Do not fear, Miss Silveston, the doctor and his daring band of outriders will protect me. Come early. I am afraid your mother will think our call is a regular visitation. Lads, we must make our adieus at once."

"Lead, sweet lady, we'll follow." Mr. Mallin, turning, added, "Miss Silveston, it would never do for us to forfeit your mother's good-will or her invitation to come again might be withheld."

Nancy Netherly laughed when Ronla answered soberly, "Dat's suah! marsa bettah be karful fer dis ole nuss' honey-chile dreffl' 'strepteros w'en her rizabls riz."

"Thanks for warning, Miss Silveston." Turning to his brother he remarked, "Come, let us learn our fate, every moment counts." Later, when bidding Ronla good-bye, Donald remarked, "Your mother

was very forgiving, I shall have the highest regard for "streptherous" persons after this enjoyable visit and visions of Aunt Ruthie's delicious jumbles will make me more homesick than ever."

"Her ladyship's visions will not be very pleasurable if you keep her waiting, Don." Twinkles in speaker's eyes belied his earnest words when he spoke, "Now that tyrant of a brother is gone, I will say good-bye and thank you for a most enjoyable hour. Yes, Miss Silveston, Dr. Roland has placed us in his debt by sending you to Haroldean Heights."

"That obligation can be easily met, Mr. Mallin."

"How?"

Ronla answered, smiling, "Being our guest relieves you of all responsibility today."

"I trust then your mother will not banish us—overmuch responsibility has a crushing effect."

"Aunt Ruthie's mistress is quite tender-hearted."

"You have saved my life, Miss Silveston. Thank you. Good-bye."

Dropping the portiere Ronla remarked, "Well, momsey, what did you think of our new neighbors?"

"I am delighted with them. Mr. Netherly is very agreeable and his young wife most charming. For a small village our neighbors so far are very promising."

"But St. Jude's is not a village."

"How?" answered Exilesnest's mistress in a tone of surprise.

"Just because the church and Exilesnest are on Haroldean Heights."

Mrs. Silveston smiled, then remarked, "I guess I shall have to import Brudder Johnson to keep mammy

in proper frame of mind when she learns this piece of news."

Ronla smiled as she slipped down on a hassock beside her mother's chair, then looking around the apartment remarked, "Do you not think these curtains accord well with the coloring of the paper?"

Mrs. Silveston laid her hand affectionately on the speaker's shoulder and answered animatedly, "The whole house is as dainty as can be, thanks to my dear good fairies."

Ronla laughed happily, then glancing around the apartment said, "I am glad they made the dining room like the pantry, long and narrow, and placed additional space in this room. I do not regret the porch on this side being cut off by slanting offset and dining-room window, it forms such a cozy nook for fireplaces in both rooms."

"Will you write the architect you approve of his plans?"

Ronla laughed and answered jestingly, "It is a grievous pity that I do not know his address, I am so delighted with my own cozy nook. Mrs. Netherly asked me how I liked it, I half imagine this double window-seat and wooden center bracket for a plant has been a recent addition, the long glass doors will be handy in summer time. I wish I could inveigle the agent to have this part of the porch enclosed in glass for this winter for you."

"My room is the only sun-parlor I need, dear; do not trouble about me."

Mrs. Silveston really appeared to be a true prophet, for when her daughter returned from the Morning

Service her bedroom was most cheery and bright with the health-giving sunshine. Bubbling over with delight Ronla said, excitedly, "Everybody was as cordial as possible; you must call at the rectory sometime, the parlor is a perfect treasure house of beautiful things all in quiet taste and not overcrowded. I certainly was surprised, there must be wealth in the family somewhere and Nancy——"

"Nancy, child?"

"Do not be shocked, that bargain was signed and sealed before we went to church. I was surprised to learn that the rector's wife was as eager and delighted to find a young friend as I was myself. Oh, mother, I met, too, Nancy Santa Claus' doctor and his bright motherly wife; how pleased Auntie Roland will be that we have found such congenial friends! I must add a postscript to your letter and a few pen and ink sketches of Haroldean Village and Heights." Leaning over to kiss the pale shut-in, she further said, anxiously, "Was I selfish to leave you so long?"

"You would not think that, dear, if you only knew what a pleasure it is to hear about everything on your return."

"Never mind, mother, you will feel stronger soon and can enjoy things too."

Aunt Ruthie's shuffling feet on the stairway caused the speaker to hasten into her own attractive room to lay aside her wraps.

One morning Aunt Ruthie's young mistress entered the kitchen and said, smiling, "My, mammy, I did not know Exilesnest harbored a public benefactor before."

"Go 'long dar, Leetle Missie, yo' makin' fun ob yo' ole nuss."

"Hearing is believing. Listen: Jane mailed me the *Texum News*."

Mammy still looked incredulous but remained silent—"The road between Texum Township and Haroldean Heights is in quite bad repair. All persons having to ride or walk over its humps and hollows will be glad to learn that at the last borough meeting the worthy and genial host of 'The Blossoms' in most convincing terms brought the matter before that august body and forthwith the necessary appropriation was made for the work." "There now, mammy, Jane must have told her father what you said, and now I have another piece of good news—Auntie Roly wishes to be remembered to you and to tell you she has had good success with the biscuits."

"Thankee, Leetle Missie. Missie Roly's a fine lady, dat's suah!"

Laughing, the Indian maiden said, "Are you good solving riddles, mammy?"

"Sakes alive, w'at be yo' at nowah?"

"Nothing very wicked, but tell me when Columbia's daughter and John Bull's son marry, what will be the nationality of their child?"

"Laws! hit's 'scand'lous, Leetle Missie, ter be allus pokin fun at yo' ole nuss."

"Give it up then?"

"Yass, suttinly, Missie Ronla."

"I am truly surprised you could not guess it, it is so easy. Not try again? Well, here goes; that child will be a real—live—heathen Injin."

Mrs. Silveston must needs learn the cause of Aunt Ruthie's merry outburst when her daughter entered

the little sewing room. Later, Ronla looked up suddenly from her task of repairing the braid on her best cloth skirt and said, soberly, "Mother, I just had an inspiration; perhaps I could interest our rector in the Samaritan Hospital."

"You certainly ought to be able to convince him of the worthiness of the cause, if any one could."

That afternoon Mrs. Silveston inquired when her daughter returned from the rectory, "What is the result of that screwing process of your courage?"

"Oh, mother," answered the excited maiden, "that process was hard on my heart, but the result is far beyond my expectations. Our rector entered heartily into the scheme to support a bed in the Samaritan Hospital and much to my surprise said the missionary society would appoint me to take charge of that special fund." Mrs. Silveston laughed when her daughter added jestingly, "Mammy will have to put a padlock on our money chest now."

CHAPTER VIII

UNKNOWN ARTS AND "UNWARY ANGELS"

THE opening and closing of the parlor door and a few hurried footsteps awakened Mrs. Silveston's curiosity. Later, hearing alternately merry laughter and tacking, she gathered up her sewing and like the early explorers, pushed her way on in search of the source of such mysterious noises.

Aunt Ruthie exclaimed when her honey-child halted on the threshold of the dining room, "Skeedo, Leetle Missie, heah am yo' mudder." Placing the last tack in drapery, the person addressed remarked on rising, "You have stolen a march on us this time, mother, come in. What do you think of my latest importation from Bombay?"

"When did it arrive? Did the tag state what to call it?"

"We cannot remain longer with such rude company." Holding back one side of the portiere she added, smiling, "Mammy, place my new table right here, please."

"Table," muttered the surprised explorer. The young upholsterer surveyed the new piece of antique furniture and pleasing background, when the curtain was lowered to place, then walking over to the window-seat remarked, commandingly, "Please place a chair beside the table, mammy." Then she added, "Pray be seated, mother, I desire to get general effect of my

lady serving tea." Mrs. Silveston smiled when obeying her daughter's mandate and Aunt Ruthie grinned when the merry upholsterer further remarked in high glee, "Thank you, mother, it exceeds my highest hopes. My! I might make my fortune, if any antique dealer knew I possessed this treasure."

"You might advertise in the *Texum News*."

"Gold would be no temptation." The speaker added coaxingly, "Mistress of Exilesnest, we desire a favor. Aunt Ruthie has donated her largest tin waiter and now we need several lovely tea-cloths to add dignity to our dainty French china."

Knowing they possessed only inexpensive English ware, Mrs. Silveston answered, smiling, "You may command me to the half of my kingdom."

"Thank you, mother." Stooping to kiss her, Ronla added tenderly, "Mammy, I am glad Prince of Wales is not here or I would not answer for the consequences."

"Daddy's Diamond a sycophant; surely, child, this is a new rôle. No, mammy, my poor face would not have attraction for prince or peasant now." Mrs. Silveston could not resist her daughter's merry laughter when Aunt Ruthie exclaimed, solemnly, "Hallelujah! Bress you, honey."

"Ronla, I am curious to know where you got your ideas for the tea-table."

"I saw one at 'The Blossoms.' Jane showed me how it was made. Mine is an improvement on the original on account of effectiveness of the India cover." With a smile of satisfaction she added, "My wonderful table cost the price of an empty barrel and a few brass tacks."

Ronla laughed happily when her mother remarked, smiling, "I am certainly proud of my genius of a daughter."

The young upholsterer genius would have been astounded had she known her mother was thanking the Lord for her afflictions for her sake, because she realized as never before that in sorrows' fiery crucible her daughter's trust in the Divine One and her deep pitying love for her was forming a vessel of honor. Ah, an unselfish beauty of character makes its presence in cottage or palace a comfort and a joy.

That very afternoon Mrs. Netherly exclaimed, when opening the exiles' gate, "Well met, Doctor, come with me; it is your duty to keep close watch over the foreign exiles."

"It is well for our rector there is no handsome Adonis among them."

The doctor laughed heartily when his merry companion answered mischievously, "Turn back, Doctor, my conscience would never allow me to lead any one into temptation."

Lifting the knocker Dr. Mallin answered, smiling, "If gracious hospitality dispensed within this cottage be such—behold, a willing victim." Then added gravely, "I do not wish to alarm Miss Ronla but I think her mother would be better for a little professional watching."

Mrs. Netherly's fears were allayed when Mrs. Silveston dispensed the honors at the tea-table and seemed much brighter than usual. The doctor was not the only one who watched the genial hostess; ah, no, for Ronla in doting affection refused to

rescind the morning statement that the Colonel's Ruby was lovely and gracious enough for even a prince to covet, despite the sad marks on her beautiful face of past suffering and grief. After the guests' departure the occupants of the library were amused over Aunt Ruthie's 'speechifyin,' caused by the refractory antic of the dining-room lamp; she declared it would soon be 'a deader' and find itself on an ash-heap if it didn't look out. Ronla laughed when her mother half whispered, "Aunt Ruthie is not ready for the ash-heap yet, if she is sixty-five."

"An' all de bad drawed out in Indee's frizzlin' sun," answered the genius who concocted the scheme to import the Indian tea-table.

Ronla and her new friend also delved in other unknown arts and like the uninitiated, in general, found that time and patience would be needed ere they were experts in so complicated a trade as dress-making. It is so very encouraging for beginners when two sleeves are finished for the same armhole and other numerous blunders and mistakes occur.

In a few weeks' time Ronla felt quite at home in her new surroundings and was a welcomed visitor both at Mallin Villa and Foxgrove. Dr. Mallin had a big farm the other side of Texum and Mrs. Mallin generously sent some fresh eggs or a chicken every week to the Exilesnest mistress; nor were her esteemed friends at the rectory ever forgotten, and as an excuse for such kindness she declared the boys are not at home now, consequently it would be conferring a favor not to allow the things to spoil. One morning Ronla entered the kitchen and found Aunt Ruthie

singing happily; she felt rather loathe to part company with the birds and flying leaves, having enjoyed a walk up-hill from the country store. Glancing at the timepiece she said, "Ten o'clock." Heaving a sigh, she added, lackadaisically, "Do you remember old Jin Sen, mammy?"

"Dat pig tail? suah I does, Leetle Missie."

"He used to say, 'no workie, no eatie,' and now if I do not hurry it will be no sewie, no waistie." Gazing out the window she added half sadly, "How fortunate Mother Mallin's chicks are, to have a Parisian gown always on hand." Noticing Aunt Ruthie's troubled look as she turned, the speaker further said, in merry banter, "You blessed old soul, do not worry about me, work never hurts anyone, just wait and see my new waist and you will think I am a 'pictur suah." This speech smoothed away all puckers from the old auntie's brow, still it remained a thorn in the flesh that her old master's daughter was forced to use strictest economy in order to eliminate their dreaded *bête noir*, debt. The exiles made no pretence of being other than they seemed, consequently their friends had no expectations of lavish entertainment when informally they were guests of the Colonel's Ruby.

Whether a 'brack angel' or a white one troubled the waters will never be known, but that very afternoon Aunt Ruthie was sitting complacently sewing in the cheery kitchen when she was startled by a loud hissing sound. Mammy rose so hastily her sewing basket was upset and the spools and everything rolled on the floor. This catastrophe seemed a matter of no moment, and after a word with her

young mistress she hurried down the road. Entering an office, the man at the desk exclaimed, "anyt'ing the matter at 'e 'ouse?"

"De biler jes' a leetle frisky. Laws! plaze sen' a pussen purty libely, marsa."

"Excuse me a moment." Returning he said, "A man will got at once."

"Thankee, marsa."

"Mammy, did your misses see Lord Scarraway pass your 'ouse yesterday?"

"Fo' de lan' sake! when pussuns am drownin' dars no time ter bodder 'bout skeer-a-way lawds." In disgust the old auntie turned, but found a tall figure blocking the doorway, laughing quite heartily at the dismay and discomfiture of the agent. Stepping aside the gentleman doffed his hat and managed to say, "Good afternoon, Aunt Ruthie, all well at home?"

The person addressed curtsied respectfully and replied, "Me honey-chile am radder po'ly, sah, but Missie Ronla as bloomin' as de rose, marsa."

"Give my regards to the ladies, Aunt Ruthie. Sorry Mrs. Silveston is not so well, good-bye."

The Colonel's Jewels were highly amused when that evening the old auntie recounted, with many arts and flourishes, the happenings of her trip to the agent's; even Mrs. Silveston joined in the merriment when her nurse spoke in such high disdain about 'skeer-a-way lawds.'

The following Sunday morning, when Mrs. Silveston and her daughter were leaving the little stone church, they were surprised to note a familiar figure standing

talking to their rector. Cordial greetings were exchanged, after which the great traveler accompanied the ladies to their own tiny gate. Refusing Mrs. Silveston's kind invitation to enter the cottage and partake of their simple repast the gentleman turned to Daddy's Diamond and said, "I am charmed to meet you again, Miss Ronla; you have not forgotten your new uncle, have you?"

"Buddha would never allow me to go to Nirvana if I was so ungrateful."

Laughing, Mr. Knowlton said, "Buddha must not be allowed to go unrewarded." Then he added, smiling, "Your old uncle was in excellent health despite the heat when we left India and his sweet wife as charming as ever."

Not waiting a reply Mr. Knowlton addressed Mrs. Silveston in the most sober, earnest tones, saying, "England should be proud to have such a couple as Dr. and Mrs. Roland to represent her old historic Church in India. I can never again declare that I do not believe in foreign missions after being an eye-witness of the fidelity displayed by them in season and at all times."

"St. Paul, Mr. Knowlton, would declare that you 'spoke the words of truth and soberness.'"

"It certainly would be better for foreign missionaries if every one believed them true, Mrs. Silveston. I am certainly able to bear testimony that not only in our own Church did I find a willingness among workers at mission stations to lay down their lives, if necessary, for the cause they had espoused."

"Our view-point was changed, too, Mr. Knowlton."

A touch of pathos entered the speaker's voice when she added, "Somehow, life seemed a precious talent not to be frivolously wasted, after years of close intimacy with those who were daily living for things that are worth while." Mr. Knowlton vouchsafed no reply, so Mrs. Silveston said graciously as she passed through the opened gate, "So we cannot persuade you to come in?"

"No, thank you, Mrs. Silveston, I must catch the two-thirty train for London. My own pleasure must be subservient to duty today. Mrs. Hewlson lived for many years in my sister's home. I am the bearer of tidings of her kind benefactress' daughter." The Colonel's daughter smiled when he added banteringly, "Remembrance from your new uncle to Aunt Ruthie. Ladies, my nephew sent his regards. Good-bye." Bowing in most courtly manner he lifted his hat and started to ascend the hill.

Auntie became anxious about her honey-child, especially as she had her misgiving whether it was quite wise for her to attend service that morning, the weather forecast not being the most promising. Witnessing the adieus at the gate from the library window, mammy opened the door and the ladies laughed when the old Auntie said anxiously, "Bress yo', honey, git in afore yo' blowed clar way. Closing the door she added, mischievously, "Leetle Missie, Marsa Knowlby knows a lady w'en he seeds un. I clar! dat bow warmed de cockles ob me h'art. Lan sake! doan't fall, honey."

"Excitement is bad for those cockles, mammy, while worry and anger is sure death."

"Hark at de chile, honey, pokin' fun agin." Chuckling she added, "I clar! hit sez righteus anger 'lowed som' times, Leetle Missie. Yass! cockles or no cockles. Honey, yo' ole nuss wuz a-wishin' one ob de Kulnel's pompey lawds wuz passin' ter seed dat scrumpterus kurtsey. Yass! Marsa Knowlby am a gemman, dat suah."

Laughing, Ronla remarked, "Mother, it is my opinion that allowing mammy to remain at home has had what grandpa would call 'a deleterious effect.'"

Smiling Mrs. Silveston remarked, affectionately, "Run along, daughter, and get ready for luncheon."

"All right, mother, I will obey at once, for it surely would have a 'deleterious effect' on your child to have to eat cold viands."

Mrs. Silveston smiled when Aunt Ruthie remarked, "I clar, Leetle Missie doan't need any dem cocholath-any pills ter git a cheery nater. Bress her. I'z gwine now, honey. Calls Missie Ronla ef yo' needs anyt'ing mo'——"

A voice called, "Please do not waste any more time 'speechifyin.' Run and look after luncheon, I have a real unfashionable appetite today."

"I nebber spoke on an-nuther word, Leetle Missie," but halted in the entry and added, coaxingly, "Gine de hunfashunbels ter day, honey, dat 'sprise——"

"Mammy," called a warning voice from the back bedroom.

Aunt Ruthie concluded, wisely, that "now was the time for disappearing." Ronla laughed merrily when she heard the old auntie singing as she descended the stairway, "Break-a-way dar, trubbl'. Break-a-way!"

Later entering the bedroom, in her amazement she inquired, "What, mother! crying. I shall command Aunt Ruthie never to sing another plantation melody."

Mrs. Silveston hastily brushed away a tear and answered, "Nonsense, Ronla, what an idea! I am afraid if you stopped mammy, I should sing them myself." Smiling, she added, "Have you forgotten that I was 'riz' on those old plantation songs." Rising, the mistress of Exilesnest further said, rather sadly, "Next Sunday will be the first Sunday in Advent. I did not realize that the season of Yuletide was so near at hand."

This last remark afforded Ronla the clew to her mother's sad musings and the presence of those tears. The Colonel's Jewels followed Aunt Ruthie.

Later, while resting in the library, among subjects discussed Mrs. Silveston touched upon the methods employed by them when celebrating the Yuletide season in far-away India and in her childhood home across the seas. The blustering wind increased in velocity during the afternoon and prevented the mistress of Exilesnest from leaving the portal of her comfy home to attend the afternoon service, even the brave Indian maiden had a tussle with the elements as she mounted the hill; holding on tightly to her hat and library book she managed to open the tiny gate, but on ascending the porch steps a familiar voice called, "Dis way, Leetle Missie. Lawd ha' mussy! but hit am a drefful blow'." It took all the old auntie's strength to close the front door after her young mistress had entered the library. The howling

and screeching of the wind around the cottage had a rather depressing effect upon Mrs. Silveston, so Ronla suggested their retiring earlier than usual. Aunt Ruthie loitered over her evening task of preparing her honey-child for the night, seemingly interested in the story, which had been recommended by her young mistress' friend, Nancy Netherly. Ronla Silveston was a good reader and the plot so alluring that it was ten o'clock before all lights were extinguished in the nest of the exiles.

At one the storm had subsided somewhat, yet Mrs. Silveston, who had awakened suddenly, called in a frightened voice, "Ronla! Ronla! come with me. I must learn what is the matter with mammy. Hark! Hurry."

The person addressed answered, commandingly, as she hastily donned her wrapper and slippers, "Lie still, mother, I will go and see what the trouble is."

In a few moments the youthful envoy returned and laughingly vouchsafed the information, saying, "Just plain nightmare, mother; I am sorry that you should have been so frightened. Lie down. Let me tuck you in. Are you warm enough?"

"Yes, dear, but run to bed or you will take cold yourself."

"Do not trouble about me, I was frizzled and par-boiled so many years, I am glad to be chilly; good night."

The merry speaker did not dare to inform her mother of the fact that her old nurse was tugging at the bed-clothes in frantic manner, crying, "Lawd ha' mussy! sabe me honey-chile," and that she had been

dreaming that Jess was trying to choke the planter's daughter and drag her into the old Virginny courthouse.

A letter bearing Uncle Sammy's post-mark was handed to the exiled widow the following morning. The remittance for quarterly rental of plantation was enclosed. With laughter and many halts and some feelings of consternation, Ronla read aloud after closing the door:

"Onhered Misses i is sory ter hab ter writ dat Jess combed a cussin an swarin an sez he is gwine ter hab hisn writes. He sech a low down nigger I sen me gran chillun skeedoin wen I seed him comin. Law missie he acts saft as lasses an wen he got hup ter leab he sez am de fambly well i heerd dey stayin in bombey indie wal misses i unconsnarily hanserd yass suah. i clar wid dat he run way laughin tinks he cotched me nappin honey hain't dat a jokes Jake swars he tuk steamy boat i opes dem injins skeewallups him fer a swar he aint fit fer a lobely ladi or a dacent pussun lik aunt ruthie ter speechfy ter an dat am de truff

Speecsfully yr umble sarvent at de hedge in 'Meriky."

It was most fortunate that the Colonel's Ruby sought Dr. Roland's advice ere leaving India, else otherwise he might, unwittingly, have brought distress upon his esteemed friends by disclosing his knowledge of their present address. Several weeks later Dr. Roland wrote: "One dark night a mere wreck of a

man entered the mission house inquiring for Dr. da Spaniola." Mrs. Silveston's eyes were quite misty when she read falteringly, "If there is a vulnerable spot in Jess' armor of wickedness I tried to reach it. I never yearned so much in my life for the power to awaken a desire for better things. The pitiable sight (as the man sat in a slouching attitude), dear friend, stirred me strangely and I seemed to hear ringing in my ears the words, 'The wages of sin is death.' 'The wages of sin is death.' I rejoice that I was permitted again to serve you. I simply told Jess that Dr. da Spaniola had died and the family had left India. Believing your 'times are in the hand of the Lord' will make you brave. Ah, I do not need to quote, only suggest the text, 'As the mountains are round about Jerusalem.'"

Mrs. Silveston excitedly remarked upon finishing the epistle, "Aunt Ruthie must not be told that Jess really went to India in search of us."

"You are right, mother, mammy cannot stand being robbed of her sleep, nor you either. Dr. Roland is right, too, it is better to trust than worry about something that never may happen. You know the other day you read,

"Bridges of Trust and rainbows of Hope
Lead straight to our Master Christ."

Rising and holding out her hand containing the troublesome epistle she said, affectionately, "Fire tells no tales, darling."

Laughing, Ronla took the letter and said, snatching a kiss, "All contraband goods must be confiscated.

The 'Ghat' in the library will serve my purpose. Adieu, fair lady." She then added, playfully, "Perhaps you had better accompany me to keep Fair Nubia at bay during the incineration."

Smiling, Mrs. Silveston answered, "A truce to nonsense, child, or you will be late for the meeting."

Aunt Ruthie was thus saved much anxiety, consequently was in the most happy frame of mind the following Tuesday when she learned that a sale was advertised for the following day. The old auntie usually accomplished whatever she sought to do, and this time also gained her mistress' consent to the project. As a result of another journey down to the village, several battered derelicts appeared. Undaunted, Aunt Ruthie sunned, scrubbed and varnished. Presto pass! behold a wonderful suite of furniture was placed in the empty guest chamber. Sanctimonified Janus assisted in putting the great four-poster together and much to Aunt Ruthie's astonishment refused any remuneration for his labor, saying, "Don't begrudge me gettin' pure religion, will you, auntie?"

The old nurse looked puzzled a moment, then, smiling, answered heartily, "Bettah luk hout tho. I clar' widee's are so cantankerus dey might chase yo' a putty dance, Janus—dey hain't all lik' me honey-chile—Laws no!"

The strictest economy had to be practiced the next few weeks, but Mrs. Silveston remarked one day, showing that she, for one, had no regrets, "Aunt Ruthie's new fad is a harmless one, Ronla. I would be glad to live on bread for weeks, at any time, to see her so happy."

"So would I, mother."

Later in the morning Ronla was assisting Aunt Ruthie with the curtains and last finishing touches and in girlish delight she remarked, "What is the use!" A note of sadness crept into her voice when she added, "We have no relations or friends to come visit us and it will only make more work for you."

Laughing the old mammy replied, "We jes' hab ter be ristercratical. Laws! w'at me honey-chile gwine ter do ef any dem unwary angels combed?"

"Do those kind of angels live near here?"

"Laff 'way, Missie Ronla, but dey hain't gwine ter cotch dis ole auntie nappin, so dey hain't."

Ronla patted the old aunt on the shoulder and said soberly, "The furniture looks like new, you are truly a wonder."

"Tak' kar, Leetle Missie, yo' knows what Brudder Rebus sez."

"I am not in the slightest afraid of making you puffed up. And I know mother would never have had the guest-chamber furnished had she known what a task it would be. Those old brass knobs give the bureau a pleasing old-timey air. Yes, the whole room looks very dainty and attractive."

"I's powerful glad yo' am pleased, Leetle Missie."

"All this beauty must not be wasted on the desert air. I have a few days before Christmas, so will advertise in *Texum Times*: Wanted—'Unwary angels for Exilesnest.'"

"Laws, chile, yo'll crack me funny bone yit." Then added soberly, "Laws! ef yo t'inks dis fine—yo' houghter seed de buful comp'ny 'partments in

yo' gran'fadder's home. Sakes alive! dey wuz scrum-diferus gran', dat's suah.—" Aunt Ruthie busied herself draping a curtain, then further said, "Lan's sake! dey nebber wuz empy—guess not. When Krissy wuz a comin'—Ha! ha! We pickaninnies jes bubbl' ovah wid 'citement an' wuz allus suah ter be a-peekin' round when dem coaches combed ridin' hup wid dair whips a-cracklin' an' horns a-blowin'. Yass, Leetle Missie, I wishes yo' hab be'n dar standin' sides me ole marsa ter seed dem."

"My early home at Malabar Point was quite a different kind of a place,—but, who knows! I may see the old plantation some day; anyway I am glad you have such pleasant memories of your old home."

"I kin nebber ferget dem days, chile, nor me honey-chile nuther—bress her!"

The next afternoon was bright and sunny, the out-riders having appeared that morning a little party was formed to go to Texum woods. Dr. Mallin later met them by agreement to assist them home with their spoils and as the old gentleman drove away Donald called, "Good-bye, Krissy, we expect a full stocking to repay us for working so hard this afternoon; jot it down in your book and do not forget our Indian friend."

The jovial Doctor laughed when the rector's wife remarked, "I am desperately jealous, Donald; it is a good thing Krissy has a better memory than you have;" adding saucily, "You are real mean, I will never speak to you again."

Donald laughed, then in mock seriousness said, "Spare me that fate, Mrs. Netherly; I promise to

write to Krissy tonight and swear that you are the sweetest, most darling creature——”

Ronla in mischievous glee turned toward her rector and exclaimed, “When you desire to procure a divorce, call on me, I will not fail you.”

Mr. Netherly laughed when Donald Mallin remarked, despairingly, “Oh, the fickleness of woman-kind, I might have known heathen Indians could not be trusted.”

All merriment for the time being was hushed when Ronla called excitedly, “Come quickly, Donald, I think I see a piece of mistletoe.”

“I come, fair lady. Oh, ‘a kingdom for a knife.’”

Mrs. Netherly supplied the urgent need, but ere hastening to the conquest the young knight said, graciously, “A thousand thanks for extending scepter; having been restored to thy good-will, mountains or dragons have no terrors for me now.”

“Not even sweet rosemary and prickly briars?”

Mrs. Netherly was astonished at her young friend’s evasive reply and the appearance of a regular stratous cloud overspreading his face as he turned away, was a surprise indeed.

The rector of St. Jude’s joined the group gathered around the oak tree and remarked, looking at his watch, “Come, wife, it is getting late. Mrs. Silveston, too, might be anxious if darkness overtakes us. Gather your spoils, boys. Forward march, for Haroldean Village.”

The outriders escorted the fickle maiden safely home. Just as Mrs. Silveston parted the portieres to go in search of Aunt Ruthie and inquire if she did

not think something had happened to keep her daughter so late, Ronla entered the cottage and rushing into the library exclaimed joyously, "See my piece of mistletoe. Oh, we had a glorious time! Nancy wants me to come over to luncheon tomorrow."

Later, when loitering at table after the evening meal, Ronla remarked, "I must be up betimes tomorrow to accomplish all I have on hand before I leave for the rectory." Then added anxiously, "I will not go—if you would rather not be left alone——"

Aunt Ruthie nearly dropped a plate in her surprise and said, "'lone!—I clar, honey, dat am de most uncompli t'ing I eber heerd—" Laughing gleefully Ronla hastily said, teasingly, "I am astonished that grandfather allowed you to interrupt any one. Listen, mother, I will finish the sentence before your nurse gets off on another tangent." The puzzled, perplexed look disappeared and the old auntie laughed happily when the speaker added quite soberly despite the merry twinkles in her eyes, "Alone with the bestest, most faithful, goodest nurse that ever lived."

"I leab dis chile wid yo' honey, she jes' gittin' ter strepterus fer dis ole auntie ter kar fer any longer, dat's suah!" Chuckling happily the old auntie passed into the pantry and soon disappeared. Mr. Log was deserted that evening, as the ladies retired to the mistress' room. Ronla made herself comfortable in a dainty Indian silk kimono and busied herself, while Aunt Ruthie bustled about assisting her mother, finishing and tying up several remembrances for Nancy and the Doctor's wife.

If Aunt Ruthie was puzzled that night at dinner, she was surprised bordering on positive fright when her young mistress entered the kitchen the next morning and said, with arm extended, "The dish-towel or your life."

"Is yo' gittin——?"

"I am getting nothing. I am perfectly sane." Then she added kindly, "Come, hand me a towel, mammy, I need your help with the greens—you know—Injins do not know anything about Virginny ways of decorating."

Aunt Ruthie complied, most reluctantly, to her young mistress' demand, and later, when the treasured mistletoe was hung under Colonel Silveston's picture, Aunt Ruthie brushed away a tear as she watched her young mistress give the last finishing touch to the unpretentious yet attractive library, and found no words to make reply when she said, "Mammy, this is my lover. Dear old daddy, I wish you were here to kiss me."

The speaker was forced to choke back the sobs when her old nurse exclaimed in hushed tones, "Bress us, Leetle Missie, me chile am comin'." Then added, trying to smile, "Doan't we look scumdiferus fine down heah, honey; hain't yo' chile jes' a wonder, misses?"

"The rooms certainly look lovely. At what hour do you expect the coach to arrive?"

"Laws, honey, yo' needn't be a-smilin', we nebber knows w'at am gwine ter happen w'en Krissy's bobbins' 'bout. Suah no!" Then added, "I jes run an' stick de rest ob dis holly back de burous."

Ronla turned and said, soberly, "Give me the holly, mammy, I will finish. Go to your baking. I will be over to the rectory to luncheon, so you can bring mother's up stairs on a tray—" trying to smile she added—"Remember! get through your baking this morning and perhaps it would be wise to prepare something extra for the expected celestials."

The Colonel's daughter was mounting the stairway when Aunt Ruthie, with beaming countenance, exclaimed, "Hark at de chile, honey, w'at am we gwine ter do?" Smiling, Mrs. Silveston answered, "Perhaps her case might be submitted to our good rector." Mrs. Silveston laughed quite heartily when Aunt Ruthie said, "Parsons knows nuffin——"

"Why, mammy, you shock me."

"I's means no disspecks ter Marsa Neth'ly, honey." Mrs. Silveston laughed happily when her old nurse added, banteringly, "Leetle Missie gittin' so strepterus. Laws, honey, yo' sez I's free. Ha! Ha! I guess I jes hab ter be leabin'." It did the old auntie a world of good to hear her mistress laugh so heartily when she spoke of her privileges as a free woman. Hearing footsteps the speaker further said, amidst smiles and chuckles, "Laws! Honey, I's bettah skeedo libely or Leetle Missie might cotch me. I clar! me bread might be leabin' de pans ef dar any mo' dinomo sploshuns 'round heah."

As Aunt Ruthie disappeared into the pantry a sweet young voice called, "Please come upstairs, mother, I want you."

The mistress of Exilesnest obeyed the summons and spent the rest of the morning in her room.

When Aunt Ruthie entered with the tray, Mrs. Silveston dropped the curtain, slightly shuddering, and there was an expression of anxiety on her face when she said, "Protect yourself well, Ronla, it is so dark and blustery. I know we are going to have a storm." "Hurrah! then Krissey can use his big sleigh tonight." Then the merry maiden added soberly, laying her hand tenderly on her mother's shoulder as she stooped to kiss her good-bye, "Take a good nap and do not worry about me. I am bundled up enough to go to the Arctic regions." Turning to address Aunt Ruthie she said, jesting, "You will come and dig me out of the snow, if it storms, mammy?"

The speaker whisked out the room laughing, without waiting for her question to be answered. Ronla Silveston was a fine walker, but as the old auntie watched her young mistress trudge down the road, she realized that she had all she could do to battle with the furious blasts and gave a sigh of relief when she beheld her turn in at the rectory gate. Ronla's old nurse was not the only one who watched the struggle with the elements, consequently when the brave Indian maiden stepped on the porch the door opened and a voice called, anxiously, "Come quickly, dear." Despite the fact that Mrs. Netherly only opened the door sufficiently wide for her friend to enter, yet the wind upturned the rug, blew several hats off the rack—the library door closed with such a startling bang that the sweet hostess exclaimed, "Oh! this dreadful wind. My! I was afraid that you would be blown away before you entered the gate." Kissing her

guest she added, cordially, "Take your wraps off in the hall. Luncheon is ready. His ministerial highness desired it to be served earlier today." Laughing, the sweet hostess opened a door, saying, "Our honored guest, Princess Ronla, has arrived. Come! leave your musty books at once or you may merit her displeasure."

The rector of St. Jude's rose, came hastily forward and said, when making a profound bow, "There is no one more welcome to Foxgrove, Gracious Princess. How is it that your Nubian bodyguard allowed you to come unattended in such a gale?"

"'Cose Princess Ronla so strepterus she likes once in a while to travel incog, Father Confessor."

Smiling, Mr. Netherly answered, "I will absolve you today as long as you were coming to place yourself under the shelter of the Church, but I am afraid I shall have the painful duty of notifying your highness' mother of this escapade."

Laughing, Nancy patted her friend's hand and said, as she cast a loving glance toward the jolly Father Confessor, "Don't let him frighten you, dear, I will lock him in his den if he dares violate the sanctity of the confessional. Come! we must hasten if we expect to have the chancel trimmed before evensong."

Mrs. Netherly had heard the story of the "Princess' rescue" and jestingly often called her namesake Princess Ronla or Indian princess. The Colonel's Jewels never tired of telling little incidents of the brave Colonel's and Surgeon's life in India, but their manner of living was not discussed nor did the family

at the rectory learn of the mystical ring or that the ladies of Exilesnest had in their possession anything so valuable as jewels.

Ronla had a happy afternoon and when the tired workers rested in the pews during the short service they felt fully repaid for their efforts. Yes, the chancel of St. Jude's was indeed a bower of beauty. The outriders were of incalculable assistance in the high step-ladder acts. Donald escorted the happy maiden home and said lugubriously in parting, "Mother insists upon my accompanying the family tonight."

"Why, Donald, I thought you adored your grandmother?"

"I do—but——"

"A little bird whispered that someone would be disappointed if you remained at home."

Donald answered rather crossly, "Who's been—?" Ronla extended her hand and said cordially, "Good night, Donald; best wishes for a very happy Christmas."

Donald Mallin rather enjoyed battling with the storm as he trudged down the hill. Dame Nature seemed to be in accord with his thoughts. Banging the gate he muttered, "Darned cad! what am I thinking of? Fancy a queen like Ronla Silveston marrying a mere boy." Entering the house he thought, "Poor Rosemary! I am afraid she will not find me very hilarious company tonight."

Umbrellas were not of the slightest use, and despite the whiteness that clung to her raiment Ronla Silveston's cheeks were quite rosy and her eyes shining like

stars when she entered the kitchen door. Divesting herself of her wraps in the pantry she ran into the library, and was given a most cordial welcome by Mr. Log, as he crackled and sputtered. Bubbling over with the enthusiasm of youth, she laughed joyously as she leaned over to kiss her mother and said, "Make haste, mother dear, Aunt Ruthie's concoctions have a savory odor. My! I have the appetite of a hungry hunter after a day's sport. Rise! allow me to escort you. Mammy said, 'dinah am sarved, Leetle Missie,' as I passed through the kitchen."

Aunt Ruthie nodded her head and grinned when she heard her young mistress remark, "Fair hostess, I see the coach has been delayed by the storm." Smiling, Mrs. Silveston answered, "I am truly thankful you were not with that party; if you had been much later, mammy would have had to go out in quest of several St. Bernard dogs to lead the rescue forces."

"I am glad I spared her such an arduous undertaking, mother." Looking up at the serving maid, she further remarked, "We would have been real ristercratical tonight, mammy, but Mr. Donald had to refuse my invitation to dine with us." Turning to her mother, she added mischievously, "Never mind, mammy, who knows? maybe we may become acquainted with some pomper lawds before Krissy comes again." Even Mrs. Silveston joined in the merriment over Aunt Ruthie's look of disdain and shocked tone when she exclaimed, "Pompey lawds, heah—I clar, honey, but yo' chile lobes ter poke fun at yo' ole nuss—dat's suah."

Almost as startling as a sudden clap of thunder was the sharp metallic ring of the knocker. A moment elapsed ere Aunt Ruthie realized that it was incumbent upon herself to answer the summons and learn who craved admittance that stormy night.

CHAPTER IX

"'SPRISSES AND VULTURE TRAITS."

CHRISTMAS EVE Aunt Ruthie had given the neatly set table a holiday touch by artistically arranging holly sprigs around the lighted lamp. All the table accessories in the line of napery attested to the proficiency and artistic skill of its sweet, dainty mistress. Yes, it would have been rather a trial to be forced to use the coarse napery which their limited means could only afford, consequently the new mistress of Exilesnest was thankful the stowaway trunks contained quite a number of fine linen sheets which proved a perfect treasure-house when planning for the needs of her family after their arrival in England. The Indian exiles were perfectly oblivious of their attractive surroundings and gazed at each other in speechless amazement when Aunt Ruthie on opening the front door exclaimed, "Bress me soul! hit am Marsa Knowlby dropped out ob de skies." Then rising to the exigencies of the occasion added, most cordially, "Come right in, marsa."

The cold night air swept through the library, so hastily drawing the heavy portieres Aunt Ruthie's young mistress commanded, "Remain where you are, mother, I will make myself the first aid to the storm-wrecked travelers. Yes, mammy and I will attend to everything." Smiling, she added in half whisper,

"Aunt Ruthie will be happy now, it is so aristocratic to have company during the Yuletide season." When the speaker parted the entry portieres, smiling and bowing gallantly the new arrival remarked, "The motor refused to budge another inch so I have come to crave the hospitality of Exilesnest, Miss Ronla."

While graciously seconding Aunt Ruthie's cordial welcome Ronla's heart gave a great bound when she heard a familiar voice call when the old auntie was about to close the door, "Wait, please—mammy."

"Marsa Gustus," muttered the surprised door-tender, then, peering out into the darkness, added commandingly, "Fo' de lan' sake! bring dat honey misses outer de storm. Lawd ha' mussy, hit am ah dreffil' night."

Mr. Knowlton remarked when the old auntie was trying to close the door, "Please return to the library, Miss Ronla, you will take cold." Miss Janette Knowlton grasped Ronla's hand and smiling in her sweet cordial way said, "Obey my tyrant of an uncle, Miss Silveston, or he might command Cousin Augustus to leave me to my fate in the snow-drifts."

Laughing, Mr. Augustus said, "This is my naughty cousin, Janette Knowlton, Miss Ronla; shall I carry her back to the car?"

"Indeed you shall not." Miss Knowlton laughed merrily when Ronla added with mixture of mirth and graciousness, "Aunt Ruthie never allows any discourtesy to be shown toward Krissy's guests. Please follow mammy upstairs, Miss Knowlton, I am afraid you will be the one to take cold."

Jenny, the maid, was greatly amused when Aunt

Ruthie exclaimed anxiously, "Laws, Marsa Gustus, doan't 'low Missie Knowlby ter falls downh des pesky steps. I clar dey am agavatin'—so dey am—dat's suah!"

The Colonel's daughter commanded the gentlemen to divest themselves of their wet overcoats before the procession moved upwards, as Aunt Ruthie would later carry them out in the kitchen to dry. At the top of the landing mammy threw open a door saying with polite ceremony, "Dis room at yo' 'sposals, gemmen—dis ole auntie be back in a minutes ef yo' needs anyt'ing."

Miss Knowlton and maid followed their guide still on to her young mistress' room and after suggesting several changes for their comfort remarked on leaving, "Me Misses am waitin' yo' comin' in de li'bry, Missie Knowlby." Turning to the maid she added, "Ef yo' wants dis ole auntie fer anyt'ing—ope de doo'ah opposite de li'bry. Laws me, I'z guess hit hain't very taxus ter find de panty wid de doo'ah wide open. Shall I bring yo' dinnah up heah?"

"Jenny will come down, thank you, mammy," answered Miss Knowlton in a tone that admitted of no further discussion.

"De panty-room am comfy. Thankee, Missie Knowlby."

Ronla rushed into the dining room saying impulsively as she patted her mother on the shoulder, "Do not bother, momsey, our black fairy will manage somehow—my! how exciting, the town news will have something to write now."

Smiling, Mrs. Silveston replied affectionately,

"What nonsense is your brain concocting now, child?"

"No nonsense! 'hit am de bressed truff'. Listen—you yill read in next week's edition that the charming widow of Colonel Silveston entertained——"

"Come hasten, Ronla, they may come down any minute." The person addressed picked up the platter of "savory concoctions" and said, "Mammy is happy now. It is so aristocratic to have the guest chamber occupied on Christmas Eve."

The gentlemen found their room most comfortable—such would not have been the case had not the mistress of Exilesnest been hunting in the stowaway trunks for several Christmas remembrances—the drum extension made the guest chamber livable during extreme weather. After dinner Aunt Ruthie did not neglect to offer another oblation to the fire-god in the chilled room. Thus it happened that this deity also unexpectedly celebrated the Yuletide festival and burned brightly as long as Krissy's guests enjoyed the hospitality of the Colonel's widow.

Returning from the kitchen Ronla linked her arm in her mother's and said, "We must hasten to the library to await our guests." Passing under the archway she added, "I opened the doors of our secret passageway; following the star of the pantry lamp may guide our new French maid to mammy's domain."

"How like your father to have such forethought," answered the sweet hostess rather wistfully.

Aunt Ruthie's young mistress seemingly ignored her mother's reply and remarked, laughing happily,

"I will never forget mammy's expression the day I threw open the pantry closet door in true Mephistophelian style. The last tenant could never have used the small sliding door. No wonder mammy was scared, it took all my strength to move it. Ah, manly footsteps." Rising hastily, she added in half whisper, "I must run and tell Aunt Ruthie."

The Indian exile flew toward the dining room and when disappearing behind the portiere a cheery voice called, "Miss Ronla, no fuss remember—the staff of life alone will appeal to us tonight." Mrs. Silveston laughed in her low sweet way when her daughter curtsied and said jestingly, "You shall be obeyed, my lord——"

Laughing heartily, Mr. Augustus turned to his hostess and said graciously, "Your lamps looked so inviting we did not trouble to walk back to the rectory, besides, Janette was not prepared to walk so far in such a gale. Pray be seated, Mrs. Silveston; have I been unpardonably rude in coming without an invitation?"

"Such weather is excuse enough for the most rash act. Do not reproach yourself, Mr. Augustus, Aunt Ruthie adores company; the only thing I regret is that the shelter of the exiles can afford so few comforts."

"Few comforts," echoed Janette Knowlton as she entered the library, "why this cottage is just as comfy as possible." Taking the hostess' hand as they sat down on the couch together she further remarked, "I am so glad to meet you, Mrs. Silveston." Then mischievously added, "Please do not tell my crusty

old cousin, but when I knew the lights were in your home, I was delighted when the chauffeur said, 'the machine refuses to budge, sir.' "

"Come in, uncle, Mrs. Silveston declares that Aunt Ruthie likes company, so you can rest by the fire with an easy conscience."

"Where is Miss Ronla? she may decree otherwise, Mrs. Silveston."

"Injins are inured to severe hardships. Ah, here she comes, she can speak for herself."

"Suppah am sarved," remarked the audacious Injin. Laughing, the guests followed their hostess to the dining room, thus it happened that five hungry hunters enjoyed Aunt Ruthie's savory concoctions and when amidst much merriment the Virginny rolls disappeared, the plate was replenished with delicious white home-made bread.

While loitering at the table Miss Knowlton remarked, when laying aside her napkin, "Pardon, but this letter 'S' is beautifully embroidered. I suppose this is your lovely work, Miss Ronla?"

Aunt Ruthie tried hard not to grin when her young mistress soberly replied, "Farmers have no time for such work—mother is the accomplished lady in this house."

The old auntie could not resist giving a low chuckle when Miss Janette glanced toward her and said, banteringly, "Does Miss Ronla always tell the truth, Aunt Ruthie?"

"Laws, Missie Knowlby, de Kulnel's darter am brave nuff ter do anyt'ing."

The old auntie looked rather puzzled when her

young mistress joined in the general laughter and said, as she cast a loving glance toward her mother, "Momsey dear, I am surprised that you should laugh when your daughter's veracity is questioned—and mammy to defame my character, too." The old colored auntie was at times what Grandpa da Spaniola termed obtuse, therefore appeared truly perplexed when the speaker added, "I shall never survive such cruel treatment."

"I will vindicate the truth of your statements at the point of the sword. Please do nothing rash, Miss Ronla."

Miss Knowlton in playful mood leaned over and clung to the old gentleman's arm saying, "You shall not be thrust into danger on my account. I retract every word. I agree with Aunt Ruthie, uncle—that your Indian princess is brave enough to do anything."

"My champion's life is saved!" exclaimed the audacious Injin, then added soberly, "You place me in your debt, Miss Knowlton."

"Plain Janette, please, or I will reverse the verdict. Releasing her hold on her uncle, smiling, she added affectionately, "It would be a crime to sacrifice such a grand man as your Ivanhoe knight. So beware!"

Aunt Ruthie had a hard time to keep her comical bone in order when her young mistress in saucy mischief replied, with most sober face, "Farmers cannot achieve much, but I count not my life dear if I save my champion—plain Janette."

Laughing, the hostess rose and led the way to the

library. Mr. Knowlton in mock seriousness bowed as he held by the portiere for Aunt Ruthie's young mistress and said, "Your graciousness overwhelms me, Princess Ronla." Mrs. Silveston was surprised to hear her daughter addressed thus by an apparent stranger, but concluded that Dr. Roland may have spoken of the rescue. Nevertheless, being a matter of no moment, the sweet hostess turned her attention to entertaining Krissy's most welcome guests. The travelers being too weary with the day's journey for games, they gathered before the tiny fireplace for a cozy, comfy chat.

The clock in the library was striking seven the next morning when Aunt Ruthie tiptoed upstairs. Leaning over her mistress' bed she whispered, "Hit's Kris-mus, honey. Laws! how am yo' feelin' atar dat 'cited eben?"

"Very well, mammy. Happy Christmas."

The old auntie walked quietly around to the other side of the bed and leaning over again spoke quite low, saying as she gently stroked the sleeper's arm, "Leetle Missie, hit am seven—Krissy done sen' his 'specs ter yo' dis mawnin'."

Ronla became thoroughly aroused when her mother kissed her and said, "Come, sleepy-head, have you forgotten that we have guests with us. Happy Christmas, darling."

"Same to you, mother, and mammy too." Yawning she added, "I will get up after I take just one more stretch in honor of Krissy's guests."

Grinning, Aunt Ruthie retraced her steps and remarked, when arriving at her honey-child's side,

"Sakes alive! Sot up, honey, an' let yo' ole nuss fix dis shawl. I's jes gwine ter do yo' hair afore I leab." Ronla, bent on mischief, whispered, "Am the 'deaders' all right, mammy?"

"Yass, suah. Krissy no cotch dis auntie nappin'—dey am all reddy an' dem fires a-burnin' libely as ef de witches wuz atar dem, so dey iz."

"Did you stay up all night, mammy?"

"Hark at de chile, honey, Missie Ronla am jes' gwine ter kills her ole auntie yit."

Mrs. Silveston, somewhat alarmed, quickly remarked, "Hush, Ronla, you will waken our guests; remember we do not breakfast until nine."

"All right, momsey, we'll whisper." Walking over to the window she added, "Come, mammy. Look! the machine looks like a snow-covered hut."

"Half after seven, Ronla. Hurry! you will have time to enjoy the landscape later. I want this room in order before our guests are called." Turning to Aunt Ruthie she said, "Here are a few aprons, mammy, I wish I had something of more value for you."

"Oh! Honey, thankee, yo' am bettah——"

Ronla giggled, saying, "Of course the Colonel's Ruby is better than a thousand presents. Bless you. Mammy, here are a few handkerchiefs. I hope these are big enough for you. Thus endeth the chapter of that old linen dress."

"Thankee, Leetle Missie, dey am scrumditerus. Laws, honey, hain't she a bressed chile?"

Smiling, Ronla remarked, "As you have on those magnifying glasses this morning—Look! how do you like the ones I made for mother?"

"Day am buful, honey."

"Indeed they are, mammy." The sad widow's face beamed as she drew the sweet face toward her. Kissing her, she added in loving tones, "God bless our child, mammy; may she have a happy Christmas!" Lifting the bolster, she further remarked, "I had this locket and chain before I was married; treasure it, dear, it was a favorite of your dear grandfather and your father too. Here, take it—wear it today in honor of Krissy's guests and mammy's fine spankin' dinner."

Aunt Ruthie grinned and chuckled with delight when her honey-child was almost smothered with hugs and kisses of thanks. Regaining her breath, Mrs. Silveston said, "I can manage very well now, mammy. Miss Ronla will dust the library."

"Laws! honey—Krissy's leetle peoples sen' dat pesky dust skeedoin' afore I combed up. Thankee."

The old auntie walked out the apartment with quite an important air and grinned when she heard her young mistress remark, "I told you that mammy must have remained up all night, she is certainly a wonder."

"Yes, child, there is much of good that we may learn from my faithful nurse. The reason that she accomplishes so much and does not keep the house in a clutter of disorder is because she systematizes her work—has a place for everything and goes out of her way many times to keep them in it. Your father called Aunt Ruthie one of Shiva's ghouls, because she so quickly found something he needed—without a light when I was ill at Tiger Hall. Do you remember——?"

"Yes! I remember you said you wanted this room put in order."

Mrs. Silveston had to smile when her daughter said saucily, as she poked and patted the bolster, "Honey, I hain't got no fine eddecashun, but dese flappers of mine jes heerd a leetle squeelin' in de nex' room."

Laying aside all nonsense the speaker quickly added, "Go down to the library, mother, I will come in a few minutes. Have you any remembrances for our unexpected guests?"

"Janette can have two of my new handkerchiefs."

"Quite a fine idea, but—what about the gentlemen?"

A little pucker disappeared from Ronla's brow when Mrs. Silveston answered, "Come down to the parlor, I have a pipe and cigar-holder of Indian workmanship which are perfectly new."

Ronla obeyed instructions concerning the hiding place of the treasures and when she was unearthing them from Jumbo's depths Aunt Ruthie passed through the "chill room" carrying several pitchers of hot water.

Later on entering the library the searcher exclaimed, "Janette will be jealous. They are little beauties. Were they father's?"

"No, Ronla, your grandfather bought them one day when I was with him. Arriving home he said, 'Hide these away among the archives'—how your father laughed—fakirs were your grandfather's hobby."

"Hurrah for grandpa; I am glad he had such a tender spot for the fakirs." When the treasures

again reposed in their neat wrappings, Ronla whispered, "Hark—momsey! Footsteps! sit down beside the fire, I will place these remembrances on the table."

Just as Aunt Ruthie's young mistress pushed aside the portiere on her return, laughing, she remarked, "Ah! Just in time."

A cheery voice pushed aside the entry portiere and said, "In time for what, Miss Ronla?"

Mrs. Silveston smiled when her daughter replied, "To wish you a very merry Christmas." Another voice exclaimed before Mr. Augustus could answer, "Do not slight your new uncle, Miss Ronla. Good-morning, ladies."

Miss Knowlton arrived in the midst of the merry greetings.

Ronla stood and gazed in surprise a moment. When she again entered the dining room—presto pass!—the holly had disappeared and in its place was a large red satin box of confections decorated artistically with ribbon and flowers. The card read as follows: "Happy Christmas from the storm-stayed travelers."

During the interchange of thanks Miss Knowlton handed Aunt Ruthie a fine silk bandana and shoulder shawl and said, "I bought these for you in Paris." Aunt Ruthie's polite curtsy and beaming countenance spoke volumes when she said, "Fer dis ole auntie?" Gazing at her gift she added, "Thankee, Missie Knowlby, dey am scrumdiferus, suah—Thankee."

Mrs. Silveston and Ronla received two latest works

of fiction, most beautifully bound, from the same generous lady guest. Notwithstanding all the excitement over the numerous surprises, Aunt Ruthie's fine coffee and waffles were duly appreciated. Yes, "a few kindly words" and actions "doeth good like medicine," in consequence thereof Dr. da Spaniola's "brack sheep" determined if possible to achieve more signal victories when planning that wonderful Christmas dinner. Later, when the guests rose from the breakfast table, Ronla cried, in mischief, glancing toward her mother, "Do not touch that 'deader,' Mr. Augustus."

The gentleman addressed was so startled that he came near making sad havoc by upsetting the little nearby table. Laughing, the sweet hostess came to the rescue and said, "Pardon my naughty child, Mr. Augustus, she is only quoting Aunt Ruthie who calls Christians and lamps that do not shine 'deaders.'" Turning to glance at her daughter she remarked, most soberly, "Ronla dear, do you not think you owe Mr. Augustus an apology?"

"Pray do not think of doing such a thing, Miss Ronla; my nephew can stand a little shaking up without any serious effect."

Notwithstanding Mr. Knowlton's kind intercession in her behalf, Ronla caused much merriment when she demurely said, as she glanced toward her much abused guest, "You are very kind, sir, but mother says I must say I am sorry."

Janette Knowlton caught her new friend around the waist, remarking as she drew her in close embrace, "Come with me into the library, you shall

not remain with people who treat you so badly." Entering the library she added, "Come, let us sit by the window and watch the storm."

Mr. Augustus was not to be thus summarily banished and drew a chair near the group at the window after his hostess and uncle had settled themselves for a match game of chess.

Janette and her cousin were much amused when Ronla narrated the little incident about her dear friend Nancy scaring her rector with the "deader."

Despite Aunt Ruthie's worries over Dr. Mallin's gift, her dinner was a success and served in "spankin' style" by the old Virginny auntie in all her new togs. Rising from the table much pleasure was expressed by the little party of storm-stayed travelers, when again looking forth from the casement they beheld that Mr. Sun was driving the storm king before him.

"Hark!" exclaimed Janette—"Hear the villagers singing?"

"Those carols are very beautiful." After a pause she added, "Did you hear the Waits at the gate last night, Mr. Augustus?"

"I may shock you, Miss Ronla, but I must confess I was so tired that I never knew anything until I heard some one call—'Hit's Krissmus, marsa—an de clock am strikin' height.'"

Laughing, the Colonel's daughter remarked, "Did you ever stay in America, Mr. Augustus? You speak the Southern dialect quite well."

Miss Knowlton, bent on mischief, said, "I see you have never met many Englishmen, Ronla, or you would know that they cannot stand being praised."

Glancing toward her cousin, the little tease added, "These pompous 'lords of creation' are easily spoilt by flattery."

The Indian maiden, smiling, demurely answered, "I shall never have the opportunity to spoil one—'Sakes alive! doan't yo' knows pompey lawds nebber hunts fer po' count'y gals.'"

Ronla Silveston did not consider her reply to be specially amusing, therefore was somewhat astonished when Mr. Augustus and his cousin were convulsed with laughter. Janette, fearing they had given offence, leaned over and kissed her new friend as she whispered, "Oh, you sweet darling, I think those lords are making a fearful mistake not to hunt for you."

Mr. Knowlton became so distracted by the merriment, he made a wrong move and lost a queen, submitting gracefully to the inevitable he said, "Janette, tell your old uncle—What is so funny?"

The lady addressed rose and walking over to an empty chair nearby the players mirthfully said, "Mrs. Silveston, I just learned that your daughter is not fond of 'pompey lords.'"

Mr. Knowlton smiled, then slyly captured a king. "Why, uncle, I am shocked that you should treat your hostess so cruelly."

Ronla lost Mr. Knowlton's reply, his nephew having claimed her attention remarked, "Excuse me for laughing." Then added soberly, "Pardon my curiosity, but is that locket and chain of Indian workmanship?"

"No, Mr. Augustus, Grandpa da Spaniola gave

them to mother before her marriage and she gave them to me only this morning."

"Then you appreciated her gift doubly. That diamond in the locket is clear and beautiful, but really, Miss Ronla, I never saw such perfect stones as the ones in your ring—last night it seemed to be alive with fire."

"Pray do not allow mammy to hear you—she declares it has some mystical powers. I rarely ever wear it." Slipping the ring off her finger she handed it to her guest, saying, "Read the inscription."

Mr. Augustus read slowly: "From Princess Mirratha Ronla Dijahamah." The speaker looked quite perplexed, so the owner of the ring remarked, "Father and his company of volunteers rescued an Indian princess. Receiving this ring before I was christened, I was named Ronla, in honor of her gracious highness." Then she added soberly, "Not even Nancy knows I possess this ring—diamonds are not a part of our life now."

"Why! I pray?"

"Because, Mr. Augustus, they do not belong to our station."

"Nonsense, Miss Ronla, your uncle is a lord."

Mr. Augustus noted the incredulous expression which passed over the face of the fair maiden before him; shrugging her shoulders she evaded the question, but solemnly remarked as she glanced up at her father's portrait, "Dear daddy was a king among men even if now I am just a poor plain Injin." Then she added more brightly, "Some day I may sell my diamonds and take mother back to the old

plantation. Judge Bemis and many of grandfather's friends are anxious for us to return."

Mr. Augustus rose and as he screened the occupant of the window seat from the little card party, said in half whisper, "Hold out your hand, please." Slipping the ring on her finger, he added, smiling, "In token of our friendship, Miss Ronla, whenever you desire to sell—allow me the first option. Promise?"

Aunt Ruthie's young mistress lowered her eyes before the speaker's earnest gaze. Withdrawing the captured hand she saucily remarked, "Will you trust the word of an 'American Injin?'"

"I will until death." Giving a sweet, happy laugh Ronla answered, "I promise." Rising, the speaker added, mischievously, "Injins are treacherous. Beware!" Walking over to join her new friend, she remarked as she rested her hand on her shoulder, "Who is brave enough to accompany me over to Evensong service? the poor sexton needs some company."

Janette and her cousin accepted the challenge and laughingly exclaimed, as they held up their hands, "I—I." Mr. Knowlton also afforded the party amusement when he remarked in a drowsy, sleepy tone, "This ingle-nook is good enough for me today." The hostess added, "My downy couch appeals to me, I beg to be permitted to retire to my room." Then with most anxious expression she said, "Are you sure it is safe, child? Hark how the wind blows."

Ronla patted her mother's shoulder affectionately and as her sweet laughter floated out into the pantry,

Aunt Ruthie muttered, "Lan' sake! dem angils be'n a bressin'. Mistah Tearyman hab his comhuppence dis time. Ha! Ha!" Then she added emphatically, "Laws, hit's me pusnal 'pinion he's be'n hangin' 'round heah long nuff." As a conclusion to her present line of thinking she hummed softly her favorite plantation melody called "Brake-a-way dar, Trubbl', Brake-a-way."

The little party of three were as merry as a parcel of school children when they left the hospitable portals of the exiles. Halting a moment outside the gate to speak to the chauffeur, Mr. Augustus insisted upon the ladies taking his arm, thus to form a more solid phalanx against their blustery foe. Nearing the chapel gate Janette withdrew her hand, the charming little tease stepped round back of the others and slipped her hand under her new friend's arm. A shade of annoyance overspread Mr. Augustus' face when his merry *bête noir* remarked, "Let us take Ronla in Lord Haroldean's pew, maybe she would change her opinion of 'pompey lawds.'" Laughing, she added, "What do you think, fair princess?"

"I am afraid I am too democratic to be changed. If I could sit in Washington's pew or in any one of your noble heroes, their deeds might inspire me, but I know nothing whatever about Lord Haroldean. I suppose I am hopeless, but," smiling sweetly she added, "Injins are cantankerus critters, Janette; they have no time to trouble about 'pompey lawds.'"

The cousins exchanged significant glances, then, convulsed with laughter, Miss Knowlton managed to say, "You precious dear." Ronla was truly per-

plexed and surprised that Mr. Augustus, too, should have found her answer so amusing. The situation was saved by the appearance of the rector's wife at the church door. Janette hastened forward—truly the world was turning topsy-turvey for the fair Injin. Why Nancy Netherly and her new friend's greeting was most affectionate. How strange!

At the church gate Ronla hastened after her new friend, the rector's wife ran down the steps to meet the fair "Injin" exile and kissing her said, "I am so delighted that you braved the storm to keep me company—you must be my guests today." Shaking hands cordially with Mr. Augustus, she commanded, "Sir Knight, you know the parson's pew, kindly lead the way."

Ronla and Nancy were pleased to hear Miss Knowlton mutter when her cousin gallantly held open the door, "How beautiful!" There were no lights in the church save in the chancel, which greatly enhanced the beauty of the decorations and the glistening marble reredos.

Last Christmas at Evensong service Ronla Silveston sat between her mother and her dear grandfather in far-away India. Yes, truly, a troubled sea of changes had passed over their lives since the Colonel left them. Janette noted a certain mistiness in Ronla's lovely eyes after the conclusion of the second hymn and was pleased to see the rector's wife slip her arm through hers as she drew the sad exile down to her seat. Nancy herself felt a little homesick and Janette, too, had memories of happier days. Thus, as they listened to the organ and their esteemed

rector's voice, God's Holy Spirit administered his touch of comfort and the quiet half hour seemed to cement more closely the new ties of friendship as they all knelt together at the feet of the Christ-child, and thus on his natal day presented their gifts of thanksgiving for the many mercies still vouchsafed them.

On their return the chauffeur informed Mr. Augustus that the motor was ready awaiting orders, in consequence thereof, when the ladies' escort entered the library, he roused his uncle and said, "Uncle, waken! Thomas says we can now proceed on our journey. Shall I leave you here?"

"You are welcome to remain, Mr. Knowlton, as long as you care to do so. Aunt Ruthie keeps the guest chamber in order just for all 'unwary angels.'"

Bubbling over with mischief, the old gentleman gazed upward into the face of his beloved nephew and said, "Did you hear, Augustus, angels in our room! My! what a sacrilege to have slept last night." Rising, he added, "Miss Ronla, I am truly sorry that I am forced to leave the abode of such celestial beings. Thank you all the same, even though the Fates will that I should say nay."

The leader of the forces remarked while his uncle was talking, "Come, Janette, call your maid and make haste; it is getting late."

Mrs. Silveston appeared in the bustle of leave-taking and while the kindly old gentleman was extending profuse thanks for her generous hospitality, the sly nephew embraced the opportunity to grasp the fair Injin's hand a moment and remarked, as he

looked down into a pair of merry, sparkling eyes, "King Neptune proved himself a good friend, Miss Ronla, when you left India and now the mighty storm king has placed me in his debt for this very enjoyable visit."

Ronla laughed when, at that moment, the old uncle bustled across the room and said, "It tears out me old heart to leave you. Do you not pity me, Miss Ronla? my nephew is such a tyrant——"

"Indeed I do, Mr. Knowlton, you have my sincerest sympathy."

Highly amused at the answer, the old gentleman laughed and said, "Do your worst, Sir Jailer." Then bowing, added, "Good-bye, Miss Ronla, ever keep a kindly thought in your heart for this unhappy prisoner."

Janette was waiting to enter the library, turning she beheld a dusky figure standing respectfully at the door and said, "Come, Aunt Ruthie, to the rescue; they are trying to spoil Miss Ronla." The old auntie curtsied slightly and answered, saying, "Lan' sake! ef Daddy's Diamond kin stan' dem pesky sons of Indee—I done specs dem sparklin' stones am hard ter spile."

Miss Knowlton's eyes danced merrily as she drew the diamond in close embrace and with mischievous glance remarked, as she looked up at her cousin, "My! I am glad that you did not tell me that Miss Ronla was such a fated queen of society or I would have been terribly nervous."

Smiling, Ronla replied, "Aunt Ruthie wears a magnifying glass at times, Janette. No! I am only a plain country girl."

The person addressed kissed the flushed cheek, half whispering, "You cannot frighten me, my lady, I am just as fond of field flowers as I am of diamonds." Turning to her hostess she shyly said, "May I kiss you too?"

"Certainly, child."

When embracing her charming hostess, Miss Knowlton added with deep feeling, "This is the very happiest Christmas we have had since mother and Aunt Janette left us. I do thank you so much for your kind hospitality." Aunt Ruthie was pleased when Miss Knowlton said, "Good-bye, mammy," and showed her pearly teeth when she added, "Do not allow any of the sons of the village to steal your diamond."

The old auntie drew herself up as if indeed such an idea was preposterous, though she answered politely, "Missie Knowlby needn't be afeerd, de Kulnel's darter nebber worshipped any dem kind ob sons."

In mock seriousness, Ronla said, commandingly, "Come! come, mammy, I will not have my compeers maligned."

Janette kissed her new friend again, then obeying her cousin's command to hasten remarked, "Keep a sharp lookout, mammy, she is not to be trusted." Laughing, she added, "Good-bye, Mrs. Silveston, I have had a lovely time."

Shutting the door the old nurse said regretfully, "Krissey's guests am gone—" then added more brightly, "I gwine hunt up some remlints fer yo' suppah, honey."

Ronla turned when mounting the first step, "I'll

be down in a moment, I must hide my jewels before the 'deader' comes to life." Laughing, she added, "You know farmers cannot afford to lounge around in their very best Sunday gowns."

At the conclusion of that little informal meal Mrs. Silveston said, "Please do not place another log on the library fire, we shall retire immediately to my cozy room. Come to me at eight o'clock if you have finished your evening chores by that time."

The speaker was later ensconced in a comfortable chair beside the low light when her daughter, in flowing tresses and silk kimono, joined her. Before opening one of her gift books she remarked, smiling, "What do you think is the very latest?"

Mrs. Silveston laid aside her book and looked at her daughter inquiringly, "Why Aunt Ruthie found a large hamper of the bestest kind of goodies on the back porch this morning."

"Who sent them?"

"Why Krissy, of course."

Mrs. Silveston laughed when her daughter said mirthfully, "Aunt Ruthie would not open the basket because it was not aristocratic to allow company to supply their own viands. Oh! mother, you should have seen her draw herself up when she remarked, 'Virginia folks never acts that way' and she could not forget her bringing up."

"But, child, what is she going to do with the things?"

Laughing, Ronla answered, "She received a 'wavy message' from Krissy after tea that he would be insulted if she did not use them."

"This week then seems a most auspicious time for your little tea-party."

"Indeed it does. I will run down to Foxgrove and Mallin Villa tomorrow," the speaker added, smiling, "It seems mammy had a dreadful 'anxified' moment when you asked your guests to have a second helping—she declared the bones of the doctor's gobbler were carved as clean as if the vultures had picked them on those Towers of Silence."

"Hark! My! eight o'clock already?"

"Laws! Leetle Missie, guess hit am."

"Oh, mammy, your dinner was a grand success."

"Indeed it was," echoed Mrs. Silveston.

The old auntie's face beamed with joyous pleasure when her young mistress smilingly said, "You looked so aristocratic in your new bandana and shawl that truly I thought we had flown back to India and were the guests of the Governor."

"Thankee, Leetle Missie, I's powerful glad yo' am pleased, suah I is. Massa 'Gustus' laff wuz mo' dan nuff fun ter pay dis ole auntie fer all de anxified contracshuns——"

Laughing, Ronla spoke, "I think your honey-child is very cruel, for she is planning to give you a lot more 'anxified' feelings."

"Law, honey, w'at Leetle Misses gwine ter do now?"

"Only going to give a tea party."

"Laws, honey, dar's nuffin contracshus 'bout dat—yo' ole nuss doan't wants ter libe in de grabe till she hab ter—an' dat's de bressed truff—dat's suah!"

Father Somnus' messengers were delayed even

though the Colonel's Jewels sought their downy couches quite earlier. In the front room Mrs. Silveston's mind wandered through the shady vistas of the past and also hoped the advent of that charming young lady would not unsettle her daughter and make her discontented with her present mode of living, but ere she fell asleep she was comforted with the knowledge that God knew what was best for them both, and this banished the legion of surging thoughts of the possible "might have beens" had her husband and father been spared to care for them.

In the communicating room "Daddy's Diamond" was also busy with her thoughts, but sinful grumblings were not among them, having been spared the necessity to work in the Texum factory ever made her grateful. Ah, a certain guest's eyes and looks puzzled her. Mr. Augustus' earnest gaze in parting seemed to convey the idea of a feeling somewhat deeper than friendship—then she chided herself and tried to banish such thoughts as countrified and silly. She was well aware that it was only natural that the hostess' daughter should be the recipient of her guests' kindly attention, nevertheless the Colonel's daughter buried her face in the pillow and muttered, "Oh, daddy, why did you leave your child? Because he has handsome eyes is no reason why he should ever think of your silly 'Diamond' again." There were tears in the speaker's eyes when she gave the pillow a poke, saying, "Avant, puerile thoughts."

"Is anything the matter, Ronla; are you ill?"

"Nothing but a refractory pillow, mother. Good night, I'm off to dreamland now."

Across the hall the occupant of the cot was too tired to be troubled with reflections of any nature whatever, consequently was enjoying the sleep of the just, having entirely forgotten the anxified contractions of that eventful Christmas day.

The "tea party" was an immense success. The merry outriders escorted Ronla over to watch-meeting and thus under happier auspices another year was ushered in. The exiles received an enjoyable "bread and butter" letter from Janette; womanlike, the most interesting tid-bit of news was imparted in the added postscript. It seems that she had just come in possession of a sparkling gem and she was to be carried captive by a very wonderful 'he' and his widowed mother to Egypt. Also, that uncle and nephew would spend the rest of the winter in the southern part of France.

The Doctor's large roomy sleigh was brought into requisition during the holidays and the outriders before returning to college gave their friends at Foxgrove and Exilesnest several enjoyable rides—if Sir Parson was engaged his charming wife gladly acted as chaperone for her dear Indian friend.

The first of March there was a new attraction at the rectory, Nancy became the proud mother of a little daughter, and its new adopted auntie and god-mother was quite devoted to them both. There was another touch of brightness for Aunt Ruthie's young mistress when the merry outriders were at home for the Easter holidays. Donald's mother or jolly old grandmother acted as chaperone for the young people. Ronla admired Rosemary Briers very much and if

that wonderful 'she' surmised the true reason of her boyhood lover's coolness, she was brave enough to hope on and not at that time trouble him with useless repinings.

Mrs. Silveston hailed the advent of spring with delight, having been housed most of the winter.

Overhauling the stowaway trunks cost Aunt Ruthie's young mistress a few tears, despite the fact that outside the parlor windows the flowers were gaily nodding in the breeze and the birds singing lustily in the nearby trees. Lifting out her handsome new riding habit brought back so vividly a flood of pleasing memories connected mostly with a certain brave colonel.

A soft Chudda shawl reminded her of the long ago. Oh, how indelibly stamped upon her memory was the recollection of a certain moonlight night! Ah, the lights and shadows in the beautiful gardens of the Government House and the glistening waters were entrancing beyond description. Yes, arm and arm they had walked and chatted. At the threshold of Tiger Hall the officer halted, "Ronla, your mother tells me that Dr. Roland desires you to join his confirmation class." Then saving the silk shawl from falling he drew the white-robed figure to his side——

Aunt Ruthie entered the room from the kitchen carrying a pile of aired and freshly brushed garments, and said, anxiously, "Am yo' tired, Leetle Missie?"

"No, mammy, I was just listening to daddy."

Aunt Ruthie's frightened look caused the dreamer to remark more cheerfully, "This shawl made me think of the moonlight night when daddy told me about

his early life at Calcutta and I remember so well his saying, 'Your parents were confirmed early in life, dear, and have never regretted it.' "

"Amen"—muttered the old auntie, and stood in awed silence when the speaker further said, with a touch of pathos in her sweet voice, "In the lonely night-watches, when tempted to live riotously and cast aside my manhood, there stood beside me the Friend who sticketh closer than a brother." Tears coursed down the dusky cheeks when her young mistress further said, between sobs, "Oh, mammy, how tenderly father said, 'God grant our darling, like St. Christopher, may find Him too.' "

Aunt Ruthie knelt beside her weeping mistress as she tremblingly tried to fold the treasured habit, then in husky voice cried, "Lawd ha' mussy, run inter de pantry, me misses am comin'!" Mrs. Silveston was surprised to find her nurse alone, but to behold the treasured habit in a heap on the floor was a mystery the old Auntie did not attempt to solve, though she stooped at once, carefully folded it and laid it away in Jumbo's roomy home.

CHAPTER X

DANGER AND A JOURNEY

MERRY May day had passed. The butterflies were daintily kissing the honeysuckle and roses in the exiles' garden, when Nancy Netherly tripped hastily up the narrow walk and around the side porch to the screened kitchen door. Later, mounting the stairs, she exclaimed, "Good morning, good folks, where is everybody?"

Laughing, Ronla answered cordially, "Part of the parson's flock are in here, but the naughty black sheep you'll find in the kitchen. Which did you come to see?"

Mrs. Silveston. appeared at the door, saying, graciously, "One never minds what foolish children say. Come right in, Nancy. Glad to see you."

"Thank you, Mother Silveston. Wee Ronla is fast asleep so I ran over to tell you that St. Jude's is to be honored with a large missionary meeting—ten churches are to be represented." Kissing Ronla, she added, smiling, "The wonderful Juniors are to have a place in the procession too." Unwrapping a round parcel, she joyously exclaimed, "How does our leader like her new banner?"

Ronla gazed—astonishment causing her to be speechless. Mrs. Silveston exclaimed, "How lovely, I have never seen a handsomer banner."

"I am glad you like it, Mrs. Silveston." Turning to

her friend she added in saucy mischief, "But, what has our adored leader to say?"

Laughing, Ronla answered, "Brudder Rebus sent a warning—so had to be silent."

Nancy had heard of many of Brudder Rebus' sayings and smiled when Mrs. Silveston remarked, "How do you manage to bewitch people, Nancy? All your suggestions bear such wonderful fruit."

Laughing happily, she exclaimed, pointing to Ronla, "There stands the guilty party, she has bewitched us all, from the rector down, with all her heathen Injins and hospitals."

In the midst of the general merriment Ronla exclaimed, "Oh! Excuse me a minute." Entering her own room she added, "I have something to show you."

Nancy embraced the opportunity to lean over and whisper hurriedly, "Please let Aunt Ruthie bring me that piece Ronla wrote for her class." Mrs. Silveston nodded and the speaker further said in her usual tone, "Rolin."

"Rolin! Rolin! Rolin!" piped a merry voice. "My, momsey, did you ever meet such a devoted spouse?"

"Beware, rash youth, you may have a husband yourself some day."

Both ladies laughed when Ronla made a wry face and answered, saucily, "How can that happen when my Ruthie dragon stands ready to slay any of the sons of the village who may appear?"

Nancy, smiling, said, "Then there is some hope for Lord Haroldean when he returns?"

"That myth!" A touch of scorn crept into the speaker's voice and she added, emphatically, "Aunt Ruthie has a grudge against pesky lords, they never would be tolerated a minute."

Mrs. Silveston looked rather shocked at her daughter's tone and manner and said, "Ronla, what will——"

"Excuse me, Mother Silveston," said the rector's wife, "for interrupting——" Glancing toward Ronla she added affectionately, "You know we always make allowance for the actions of American Indians." Rising, she further said, "Twelve o'clock; I must go or I am afraid the other Ronla will not make any allowance if I neglect her. Good-bye. I hope Friday night will be clear so you can all come."

Mrs. Silveston hurried out in the entry and leaning over the railing said, "Ronla, if Nancy wants any flowers Friday tell her to come and help herself."

"Thank you very much, Mrs. Silveston, I will remember."

Exilesnest was locked and barred the evening of the wonderful meeting, and when Aunt Ruthie caught a glimpse of the banner she leaned over and whispered, "Look, honey, heah come the chillun. Bress dem! See—Missie Ronla—Laws, hain't she jes' buful ter night." The old auntie relapsed into silence and reverently followed the service, but she could scarcely refrain from shouting Hallelujah! when the rector of St. Jude's said, smiling, "Before the recessional is sung I desire to read a few lines entitled 'Go! The Juniors' Battle Cry.' The writer having lived many years in India and witnessed the degraded state of

those abiding in the darkness of superstition, calls not only the young Juniors, but us all to a higher state of our privileges in obeying the command, 'Go.' May this battle cry be the inspiration that unites our hearts ere we leave for our several parishes." Ronla was truly surprised and her little band smiled when Mr. Netherly read in his reverent, touching manner—

The battle cry is sounding,
Juniors, obey its call.
And carry the Gospel Message
To nations great and small.
Forward march! Juniors—
Who dares to disobey
The orders of their Captain
Who'll be with them alway.

Juniors! Juniors!
Carry the Gospel Light.
Juniors! Juniors!
Fight the good fight.
Endure hardness as good soldiers
And your armor ne'er lay down
Until marching days are over
And life's crosses become a crown.

The battle cry is sounding!
Ah, this is a needy world.
Proclaim the glorious tidings
With your banners unfurled.
Go, Juniors, forward,
Faint not by the way,
A crown awaits your coming,
Work then while you may.

THE COLONEL'S JEWELS

Juniors! Juniors!
Carry the Gospel Light
Juniors! Juniors!
Fight the good fight.
Endure hardness as good soldiers,
And your armor ne'er lay down,
Until marching days are over
And life's crosses become a crown.

After services were over the rector of St. Jude's grasped the hand of the mistress of Exilesnest and said, feelingly, "Good night, Mrs. Silveston, you will forgive me if I thanked God this evening for leading you to this parish. Who can foretell the results of this meeting—several of the other clergymen have promised to organize a Junior band next fall."

Mrs. Silveston and Auntie Ruthie passed on toward the porch of the church, as there were others waiting to speak with their rector. Being accosted by a friend Aunt Ruthie and her honey-child stepped out into the darkness without waiting, or apparently seeming to care whether Ronla was provided with a proper escort home. How strange!

The leader of the Juniors was delayed in the Sunday-school room, consequently when she entered the church she was amazed and troubled to find that her mother, nurse and every one had gone. Anxiety lent fleetness to her footsteps, and when hastening down the six marble steps in the darkness she was greatly startled a moment to find herself confronted by a tall, muffled figure. Fright melted away in joyous surprise when a voice remarked, teasingly, "Is this the way you treat your friends and pass them without even speaking?"

"If they expect gracious treatment they must avoid the rôle of ghosts." Then she added anxiously, "Oh, Mr. Augustus, have you seen mother?"

"I have, Miss Ronla. I am truly the guilty ghoul who kidnapped her." Grasping the maiden's hand he pulled it through his arm saying, "Come, she is awaiting our coming in the auto." Laughing he added, "Have you met any 'pompey lawds' since I have seen you?"

"No, Mr. Augustus, but a very generous one sent Nancy a check to purchase the Junior's new banner. The children were so delighted tonight. I think I could almost hug him."

Laughing, Mr. Augustus leaned near the speaker and said, jestingly, "Would I not answer for a 'pompey lawd?'"

"No, Mr. Augustus." Withdrawing her arm she added, "Aunt Ruthie 'brunged' me up not to trust 'himmotashun' in anything."

Mrs. Silveston heard Mr. Augustus' infectious laugh and later he remarked on entering the auto, "I must warn you to look after your daughter, Mrs. Silveston, if Lord Haroldean ever returns home, for she has designs on him."

"Do not let Mr. Augustus frighten you, mother, I was only praising the kind donor of my beautiful banner."

Smiling, Mrs. Silveston remarked, "Returning home! Why, I thought his lordship was wedded to foreign travel, Mr. Augustus." Ronla leaned toward her mother and said, much to the 'kidnapper's' amusement, "Why bother where he hides himself,

mother, while Nancy has the privilege of spending his lordly income." The speaker's eyes fell before Mr. Augustus' earnest gaze when he said, soberly, "Perhaps Mrs. Netherly might induce his lordship to grant you a like privilege—if you sent him your picture."

Mrs. Silveston joined in the merriment when her daughter answered demurely, "Farmers know nothing about finances, but they have a sincere regard for even a lord if he does things worth while."

Aunt Ruthie opened the cottage door when the auto stopped before the gate and waited to assist her mistress to her room. When bidding the leader of the Juniors good night Mr. Augustus said, pleadingly, "What is your definition of 'worth while,' Miss Ronla?"

Aunt Ruthie's young mistress withdrew her hand and said, banteringly, "From a farmer's standpoint a good harvest. Mammy's truck patch would be better of a shower." Then she added, earnestly, "Let me hear your idea of 'worth while,' Mr. Augustus."

"Many things, Miss Ronla, but one that I covet most may prove as delusive as your shower."

"Pandora never lost hope, Mr. Augustus."

"Good night, again. I shall not forget your advice."

"Perhaps it is unwise to place too much trust in Injins."

Laughing heartily Mr. Augustus answered confidently, "I'll risk it."

"Mr. Augustus, 'The battle is not to the strong—the race not always to the fleet.'"

"Well! My lady! I do not aspire 'to pluck the stars,' so I hope 'I shall not lose the jewels at my feet.'"

"Jewels here, Mr. Augustus! Tell me where to find them—sweet hope! I may see the old plantation yet." Laughing, Mr. Augustus answered, "Knowing your deadly purpose, I shall guard their hiding place with my life. Look! Fair moon is rising to bear me company home. Good night."

The happy maiden hastened to her mother's room. Mrs. Silveston was reading a few verses from Evening Meditation as her nurse brushed her hair. Ronla nodded a good night to mammy and stooping to kiss the Colonel's Ruby she heard—"A book of remembrance was written . . . and they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in the day when I make up my jewels."

"Thankee, honey, fer bein' dis ole auntie's eyes."

Mrs. Silveston laughed when later a white-robed figure appeared in the doorway and said, "Fly for your life, mammy, one more word means banishment from the nest of the exiles."

Chuckling good-naturedly, Aunt Ruthie remarked when extinguishing the light, "I clar hit am scandulus, honey, de way Missie Ronla am actin' dese days."

Crossing the hall the old mammy laughed happily when she heard her young mistress saying in mock serious tone, "You had better keep that maid of yours in a more submissive frame of mind. Remember! 'Meriky is jes ovah thar.'" Laughing gleefully she added, "Good night, mother, 'forewarned is forearmed,' they say."

The next afternoon the speaker was the sole occupant of the shady corner of the vine-covered porch when an auto stopped before the tiny gate and ere

she fully recovered from her surprise Mr. Augustus alighted and came hurriedly up the path. Mounting the porch steps, he said, smiling, "Good afternoon, Miss Ronla; will you and your mother honor me again?" The speaker did not have to mention the other occupants of the car, for her rector doffed his hat and Nancy, laughing, waved her hand.

"Thank you so much. I will be delighted to go, Mr. Augustus, but, unfortunately, I shall have to decline for mother, she is now resting and not so well today." Passing through she opened the screen door, and added graciously, "Will you come into the library?"

"No, thank you, Miss Ronla, this porch chair is very inviting."

"Excuse me then, I will be down in a few moments."

Rushing upstairs Ronla found her mother fast asleep. She tiptoed quietly to her room to don a long alpaca coat; that and veil adjusted, she hastily picked up her gloves and flew down to the kitchen to inform Aunt Ruthie that she was leaving the cottage. The excitement caused a heightened color; the Colonel's daughter was not aware that her brown eyes were as sparkling as her hidden ring when she pulled on her gloves. Rising to open the screen door, Mr. Augustus and the party in the car thought the Indian maiden a most charming picture in black and white. The rector alighted to greet his "bressed lambkin's" godmother, and Nancy in merriest of moods said, "Is not Mr. Augustus kind to take mercy on we poor country folks?"

"Indeed he is." Nancy and her husband laughed

quite heartily when the speaker added, banteringly, "It is your duty to recommend him to the bishop, your reverence, he might be able to remunerate him."

Nancy telegraphed a sly glance over to his reverence when Mr. Augustus leaned toward her dear friend and said, smiling, "Your approval, ladies, will be more highly valued than either bishop's or king's."

There were mischievous twinkles in Ronla's eyes when she remarked demurely as she turned to address her friend, "Can we survive, Nancy? Truly a great responsibility is thrust upon us."

Laughing, Nancy Netherly answered, "I will try, dear."

Bubbling over with mischief the speaker added, seriously, "Do not despair, when you marry Father Newols, he will help you."

Ronla shook her hand at her friend and when she turned to settle herself comfortably, the master at the wheel remarked, quite formally, "I was not aware that congratulations were in order. When is the happy event to take place?"

Laughing heartily the rector of St. Jude's leaned over and remarked, reassuringly, "Do not believe my naughty wife. I would refuse to read the 'banns.'"

Ronla and Nancy joined in the merriment when Mr. Augustus answered, "You place me in your debt, Sir Parson; it would be a crime to contemplate another marriage of the beauty and the beast."

Ronla placed her hand over her ears and said smiling, "I will not listen when my kind friend is maligned."

The rector of St. Jude's settled back in cushioned

seat to bask in his wife's merry chatter and enjoy the quiet peaceful scene, while Mr. Augustus answered soberly, "I have an inspiration, Miss Ronla, I will interview Father Newols, and bribe him to give me the recipe to gain your good will."

The gentleman at the wheel was surprised that no answer was vouchsafed, but noting his companion's eyes were riveted on a party of ladies and gentlemen ascending the opposite hillside, remarked, "They ride well."

"Oh! Mr. Augustus, I beg your pardon."

"Why, Miss Ronla?"

The speaker's eyes were misty when she raised them and answered, sadly, "That party carried me back to India. Father was an expert horseman."

"And what about his daughter, Miss Ronla?"

"Oh! she just managed to hang on," adding enthusiastically, "Look! isn't that glorious? That lady rides like a queen."

"Is that the way the officers talked about the Colonel's daughter?"

With eyes still riveted on the party, laughing, Ronla answered, "Sir Mentor, officers in India have something more to discuss than the antics of a school-girl."

The speaker's eyes fell before Mr. Augustus' earnest gaze when he remarked, smiling, "Oh, Miss Ronla, I am afraid that you will need the offices of a father confessor tonight."

Laughing merrily, Ronla answered, "Injins always tell the truth."

"You can say what you please, but I am willing

to wager a good sum that Colonel Silveston's daughter was an important personage at Malabar Point."

Ronla shook her head dissentingly. The speaker turned slightly and said, "When will you give me the pleasure of witnessing that hanging on feat?"

Mr. Augustus was surprised to note the merry smiles die away and a sad face soberly answer, "Never, Mr. Augustus. Mother England would never allow such an unseemly act in Rotten Row."

Smiling indulgently, Mr. Augustus remarked, "Pardon me, Miss Ronla, but you are not well enough acquainted with her ways to be a fair judge."

The rector leaned over to speak with the driver of the car; hence the merits of the horsemanship of the Colonel's daughter were not further discussed.

Ten days later a note caused Aunt Ruthie's honey-child's brow to wrinkle, but Ronla could have hugged the old auntie who said, when summoned before the great tribunal, "Bress yo' deah h'art, honey, I clar young uns must stretch dar wings som' time, suah dey must. Sakes alive! ob cose yo' gwinter 'lows Missie Ronla ter go. Law me—de Kulnel wuz nebber afeerd.'

"I suppose then I must say yes."

"Clar ter goodness! honey, doan't talks dat-a-way, or yo'll spile Leetle Missie's pla-suah an' den she woan't go."

Mrs. Silveston tried to smile and as she looked up into the old dusky face she said, "Well then, I suppose I must obey and say, 'Dear child, I shall be delighted to have you accept Mr. Augustus' kind invitation.'"

Chuckling happily the old auntie left the apartment. Ronla leaned over to kiss her mother, then with the agility of an Indian rushed to the entry and caught the hand on the railing and half whispered, "I will dance at your wedding, Aunt Ruthie, you are such a dear."

"Bettah look out, Leetle Missie, Sam Ulter's wife jes' died. Ha! ha—ef I gwine back ter 'Meriky I'll hab a chance yet, Miss Ronla."

Mrs. Silveston inquired the cause of the merriment.

"Nothing very serious, mother, only Debbie Ann has become a shining angel, and Aunt Ruthie declares her chances are not yet gone. No! not a single question. Mr. Augustus may place his serving man in irons for tarrying so long."

At the appointed time Mrs. Silveston and her Nubian attendant stepped out on the porch to witness the start. Mr. Augustus loitered somewhat to thank the mistress of Exilesnest for allowing her daughter to accompany him. Ronla hastened forward alone, to make friends with 'the gentle ladies' mount,' caressing and patting the horse she promised him a nice sugar lump if he carried her safely. Resting her head a moment against the glossy silken mane, she softly whispered, "Listen, Gypsy, momsey has nobody but poor little me. Please do not be frisky or bad."

Mr. Augustus arriving on the scene at this juncture, Ronla said, smiling, "Gypsy has promised to be good." Then she added anxiously as she waved a farewell to the couple on the porch, "I hope mother will not worry too much—perhaps it was selfish for me to leave her."

The groom was still standing awaiting orders after his master had mounted, but in reality so busy watching the little scene he started visibly when Mr. Augustus gave the signal to mount and follow.

The groom knew full well that he had annoyed his kind master. Bowing, while flustered and red in the face, he said, "Pardon—My—Mr. Augustus." Another stern look caused the culprit to inwardly curse himself for his careless stupidity and rather anxious what the outcome might be for his wife's and children's sake.

Ronla had not the slightest idea of the cause of the trouble, but realizing the groom by some overt act had gained his master's ill-will, she extended her riding whip and, smiling, said coaxingly, "Mercy, gracious knight. Please do not annihilate the poor man."

Frowns disappeared, as if indeed the whip held some magical power, and Mr. Augustus answered, graciously, "For your sake, Miss Ronla, he shall be forgiven. Really, servants are so vexatious."

"Why do you have any?"

The mischievous twinkle in the speaker's eyes amused Mr. Augustus, and smiling indulgently he answered, "When you are older, Miss Ronla, you will learn that necessary evils must be borne bravely."

"If necessary evils are unnecessary, why be brave?"

"Because custom has decreed otherwise and her laws reign supreme."

"Your fate is sealed, I can do nothing more for you, at the bar of justice I leave you."

"Your father should have been a judge instead of a colonel. What are you, Miss Ronla, a witch or a child?"

Aunt Ruthie's young mistress was in one of her merriest moods and had not the slightest idea how really lovely she appeared when she raised her eyes and answered, "I am a real growed Injin, sir. Who dares to call the Colonel's daughter a child?" Laughing at the sober face of her companion the speaker added, "Did you not know that it was dangerous to insult an Indian or to impugn his courage?"

"I am the last person to do that, when I think—"

"Pardon interruption, but really, Mr. Augustus, thoughts are as vexatious as servants."

Ronla leaned over to pat Gypsy, after vouchsafing her opinion, and said in half whisper, "Come, my beauty; see that barn over yonder? Away then, the honor of America is at stake."

Mr. Augustus rightly interpreted the hasty glance and said, "England accepts the challenge."

Mr. Augustus was a fine rider, holding his horse in perfect control; hence the race was quite exciting. Nearing the goal the horses were neck to neck, but at the finish Ronla found that the other competitor had fallen away. When Mr. Augustus later rode up Ronla rather peremptorily inquired, "Why did you spoil my race?"

"Would you have England show discourtesy to her conqueror?"

"America is heroic enough to bear defeat bravely and she desires no honor if not fairly won."

"Fair Columbia, what amends can I make? I

cannot afford to lose the good will of so powerful an enemy."

"Fair play in the future will atone for all."

Bowing slightly, Mr. Augustus answered, "Your leniency places me forever in your debt. Remember, fair Columbia, the next time it will be a fight to the finish and no quarter allowed. See! what a direful penalty you have brought upon yourself."

"I submit to the conditions, Sir England, nevertheless I warn you that it is dangerous to be too sure. Miss Victory is a fickle maiden and Gypsy, too, may resent such a speech."

"I am confident, fair Columbia, that she will be delighted to have England win."

"Well then, Sir England, I trust myself no longer to the caprice of a traitor." Ronla drew in the reins, as if indeed she really dared to carry out her threat and dismount. Mr. Augustus quickly gained her side and sternly commanded, as he grasped the hand that held the reins, "For God's sake, sit still, child. I will not be responsible for Gypsy's actions if you excite her."

"Unhand me, Sir England, it is dangerous to arouse Injin blood."

Ronla's eyes fell before the earnest, pleading gaze of her captor, and her heart was in a turmoil of conflicting emotions between joy and annoyance when Sir England coolly remarked, "Promise to be good, Ronla, or I cannot risk it."

Somehow, this little denouement banished the merry mood of the Colonel's daughter and she replied with hauteur, "A prisoner has no choice. I submit."

Sitting erect on the saddle Mr. Augustus answered, "Thank you, Miss Silveston."

The person addressed was rather surprised at the answer and she thought—ah, somebody else can be haughty, too. During the latter part of the ride the conversation was carried on in rather a formal, desultory manner, but after dismounting at the tiny gate, Mr. Augustus followed fair Columbia to the porch. Holding her hand in parting he remarked, anxiously, "Have I offended beyond forgiveness, Ronla?"

"Certainly not. What a quixotic idea!"

The smiling maiden was surprised at the effect of her answer. With a happy little laugh Mr. Augustus turned to dismount the steps; on second step he halted, when Ronla said, mischievously, "I am rather inclined to think Dame Rumor speaks truly when she declares that all Englishmen are inclined to be masterful." Laying aside the jesting tone she added with deep feeling, "It has been two long years since we parted with Blackie and Fan; Mr. Augustus, I cannot express what a pleasure it has been to ride again."

"I am glad you enjoyed it." Gazing up into Ronla's saddened eyes he added, pleadingly, "Would it be possible to honor me again, at the same hour, next Friday afternoon?"

"I should be delighted to accept—unless I find mother has worried herself ill over this venture, then I will write."

"Good-bye, Miss Ronla, until Friday. No use writing. I refuse to open the mail until I see you again."

Gypsy had received her reward on their return and now the light-hearted maiden called from the stairway, "Here I am, mother, safe and sound." When untying her veil in her mother's room she said, "Oh! I had such a glorious ride, it was certainly 'scumdiferus' to be on a horse again. Mr. Augustus promised to bring Gypsy over next Friday afternoon. Is he not kind?"

The next morning Mrs. Silveston remarked, "I must admit that Mr. Augustus has been most kind, but, really, after all, child, we know very little about him. Your father would not be willing for us to lay ourselves under a debt of obligations which we can never repay."

Ronla gave her mother a little love pat on her shoulder and answered, affectionately, "Please do not worry, mother, or mammy will be using 'dem musselly strings' on 'Marsa Gustus.'" Laughing merrily she nodded to the old auntie as she entered the room.

"'Cose we hab ter be karful, Leetle Missie, de Kulnel an' Marsa Doctah hain't heah ter po'tect us lone women-folkses."

The old auntie laughed when her young mistress said, jestingly, "I did not think you would ever forget that Injins always carried weapons both day and night."

"Laws, me forgettery hain't de bestest, suah no. I clar' Marsa Gustus hain't gwine ter hurt Daddy's Diamond ef I kin help hit. No! yo' needn't stan' dar laffin, Leetle Missie. Me honey-chile knows som' gemmen am no good—no how! Fo' de lan' sake! dat spider hab mo sense dan som' ob dem—so we jes' hab ter be karful, dat's suah."

Ronla pretended not to have understood the serious import of the conversation and bent upon mischief said, "Mammy, the next time Mr. Augustus calls I will tell him that you forbid his visits, because

He has autos and we have none,
So that is the way the trouble begun."

"Leetle Missie am hincorregibl', honey;" pretending to wring her hands she added, soberly, "Laws, w'at am we gwine ter do?"

Mrs. Silveston, smiling, answered, "Whatever happens, mammy, your conscience can rest easy now." Adding sadly, "The Colonel had great confidence in his sparkling gem, so we must trust her too."

Ronla kissed her mother and said, soberly, "Then shall I write and decline the invitation for Friday afternoon?"

"Certainly not. Mammy and I cannot expect to keep you in a glass case all your life; your old mother is not quite so selfish as that, with all her foibles."

"Foibles!" exclaimed Ronla. "Why mammy thinks her honey-child is just 'de bestest pussun who eber breaved de breff ob life.'" Ronla concluded at the end of the week that Mr. Augustus must have possessed a few of the acute sensibilities of the spider, for he realized that too many favors would not be accepted, consequently two weeks elapsed after that Friday afternoon's ride ere another note arrived at the hilly nest of the exiles.

Mrs. Silveston watched her daughter as she excitedly tore open the envelope and exclaimed, "Another

'scrumdiferus' auto ride. Mr. Knowlton is coming and you are to go to keep him company, mother."

"If I go mammy will be all alone." Laughing, Ronla ran into her room, then called, "I guess we can trust her even if Debbie Ann has joined the celestial army."

Later, Aunt Ruthie's young mistress poked her head into the kitchen and said, soberly, though her merry eyes belied the tone of her voice, "Mammy, what do you think is the very latest piece of news?"

Aunt Ruthie grinned—she realized her young mistress was up to some mischief so worked away, pretending not to have heard.

Refusing to be thwarted, like the street arabs Ronla drawled, "Say, mammy, your honey-child is afraid of leaving you all alone this afternoon—when we go out in the auto. Tell me now quickly, I will not go if you are afraid."

"Ha, ha! I clar! Leetle Missie, yo' bust me funny bone yit. Laws, suah yo' am jokin'."

"Indeed I am not. I never was more sober in my life."

Turning to close the door Aunt Ruthie exclaimed, "Me bressed honey-chile am allus right, Leetle Missie—hit might be kinder scand'lous ter leab me 'lone wid dem buful shiny t'ings."

Aunt Ruthie laughed when her young mistress answered, "The Colonel's jewels must be guarded at any cost. Ah! old Janus might prove a good sentinel, we will send for him to come here this afternoon."

Despite the speaker's jesting, at the appointed hour Mr. Augustus found the exiles on the porch await-

ing his arrival. When the auto stopped the ladies descended the steps. Mr. Knowlton alighted also and gallantly assisted Mrs. Silveston to the back seat and waited until his little favorite was given the seat of honor in the front of the car.

As usual the car mounted the hill, forsaking the road that wound round the hillside to Dr. Mallin's villa, then down toward the village. The old Southern mammy was a type unknown in England. Her quaint ways and sayings amused "Marsa Gustus" and he laughed heartily when the companion at his side narrated the little episode about whether Aunt Ruthie would be afraid to be left alone. Mr. Knowlton also respected the old auntie, having learned from Dr. Roland of her untiring devotion to the old planter's child.

Mrs. Silveston had a most entertaining companion—Mr. Knowlton seemingly was pleased to point out the various points of interest en route—the sad invalid's heart was quite warmed toward the old gentleman when he spoke in such kindly terms of her beloved father and of his noble work at the little English mission.

Mr. Augustus turned to the companion at his side, saying, "Miss Ronla, there is a perfect view from Dean's Hill, and nothing to alarm your mother, as the hill is neither high nor steep. I should like to return that way except for one dangerous spot at the summit. What do you think?"

"You need not hesitate on my account; but what do you mean by dangerous, Mr. Augustus?"

"Because there is only space enough for one

vehicle to pass around a sharp curve on account of an overhanging rock jutting out over the roadway. Are you willing to risk it?"

"Perfectly willing, but for mother's sake we can use the extra precaution to stop and listen. Have you ever met any machine at the curve before?"

"No, I never have."

"Well, then, Sir Chauffeur, I bid you proceed at once to Dean's Hill."

Mr. Augustus bowed slightly and answered in tones of mock seriousness, "My lady's command shall be obeyed whether they lead me on to victory or defeat." The words were commonplace, but the glance that accompanied them caused the listener's heart to flutter strangely. The Colonel's daughter settled herself in her comfortable roomy seat, and soberly pondered whether the companion at the wheel was indeed a sincere, chivalrous gentleman. Mr. Augustus gave his whole attention to the road before him as he carefully picked his way up the hillside. Aunt Ruthie's young mistress regretted not that he was thus deeply engrossed—ah, no,—for she was in no mood for idle conversation, when she realized that she must so hold herself in such control that the companion at her side or any other gentleman should imagine that Ronla Silveston could be the petted plaything of an idle hour, then be spurned and cast aside at leisure. Never before had she beheld a vision of the matter from her mother's anxious view-point. Yes! her own conflicting emotions caused Nancy's friend to admit, at last, that her old nurse was right, that it did behoove lone women-folks to be careful.

The handsome chauffeur, too, was silent as he made the creature of his will slowly ascend the small hillock. Mr. Augustus was turning to command Jeffries to go forward when he heard the honk! honk! of an approaching car. With great presence of mind, unerring eye and steady hand, he backed the machine, saying commandingly, "Don't scream and alarm your mother." Then he muttered huskily, "God help us, darling, I will try and save you." Crossing the road the driver at the wheel lurched the car forward as near as he dared to the overhanging rock and hugged closely as possible the rising hillside. The chauffeur of the jolly laughing party turned white with fright—knowing full well what might have happened for his carelessness in not stopping to reconnoiter ere rounding the curve. Ronla sat as if under a spell; she heard Mr. Knowlton's voice talking unconcernedly to her mother. Mr. Augustus placed his hand over his eyes a moment, then found voice to say, "Dismount, Jeffries, and see if the way is clear."

Rounding the curve later, Mr. Augustus slightly shuddered and said, soberly, "Do you wonder I was horror-stricken when I heard that car approaching. Look, Ronla, there is only a half a foot of solid earth the other side of that flimsy rustic fence. I should be censured for hazarding your lives."

Ronla noted how truly unnerved Mr. Augustus seemed, so purposely disregarded his former remarks and exclaimed, cheerfully, "Oh! what a perfect view, I am glad we ventured." The Colonel's daughter chatted away like a little magpie and was too thankful for her late escape to mind if the companion at her side was not his usual cheery self.

Mr. Augustus looked into his companion's eyes when assisting her to alight and half whispered, "Thank God, you are safe, Ronla,—and Gypsy will be glad, too." Ah, the refractory pillow did not disturb Exilesnest's mistress that night, even though a fair Indian maiden was late in entering 'slumberland.'

Aunt Ruthie disliked to see her honey-child anxious or troubled, so the next morning she calmly remarked, "I larned at 'fessional dis mawnin', honey."

"Confessional! echoed Ronla, and Mrs. Silveston added, commandingly, "What do you mean, mammy?"

"I jes' couldn't stan' dem puckers no mo', honey, an' Iz jes runned inter Brudder Nethly's 'fessional room dis mawnin' an ax him de truth.—Sakes alive! de parsun clares dat Mistah Gustus and Marsa Knowlby am gemmen nuff fer his sister ter knows—"

Ronla looked quite distressed and Mrs. Silveston most annoyed when she remarked, "What possessed you, mammy? Mr. Netherly will think——"

"Fo' de lan' sakes, honey, Brudder Neth'ly doan't t'ink nuthin'. Laws, I jes tole de parson de truff dat dis ole mammy gibed her word ter tak' kar ob de Colonel's jewels," then added coaxingly, "Hain't yo' shamed not ter trusts yo' ole nussie. Honey—laws me, dat parsun tooked me han' an' sez he knowed how I feeled. Yass suah! he did, an' wuz glad I combed ter 'fess dis mawning."

Ronla laughed merrily, when, nodding her head knowingly, Aunt Ruthie added, "Honey, I's gwine ter tells yo' de rest when Leetle Missie hain't 'bout.

Sakes alive! yo' knows hit spiles chillun ter heah much flatt-ries."

"I know you are dying with curiosity, mother, so I will leave you at once."

In passing to her room the speaker halted a moment to grasp a dusky hand and said, feelingly "Grandpa was a wise man to entrust his jewels to your safe keeping. You will have more gems in your crown than we will."

Mrs. Silveston muttered "Amen."

"Fo' de lan' sake, honey, w'en yo' gits sech nonsensical idees I's gwine ter run away." Chuckling merrily she added, "'Meriky hain't so far 'way now, so hit hain't."

The family at Exilesnest did not see the much discussed gentlemen until fall, for on Janette's arrival they followed that same wonderful "he" and his mother to Brighton for the rest of the summer.

Nothing of great import happened to disturb the serenity of the little family on the hill. Uncle Jacob's last letter confirmed the report that Jess had really departed for India, certainly it was a relief to know that he was out of touch with them for the present and they hoped—forever.

Mrs. Silveston enjoyed the occasional cool breezes; after the intense enervating effect of a summer spent in India, none of the exiles murmured because they were unable to follow their new friends to the shore.

The Doctor's family came and went all summer. Ronla and her mother did not miss them as much as they did Nancy and the baby. St. Jude's was open when Mr. Netherly was away in August, the con-

gregations were quite sparse and the exiles expressed the view that perhaps it would have been better to have closed the doors entirely and held the services in Texum woods, where many of the flock of St. Jude's wandered with other stray sheep of the village and town.

One glorious day the last of October, Ronla was chatting away as her mother rested on the couch in her comfy room; she remarked, "I am going over to the rectory and tell Nancy that I know she is longing 'or a ramble in Texum woods. Sleep, Ruby dear, I am sorry you are not strong enough to go with us. If our fairy godmother would only send us an auto."

The fair exiles were surprised when Aunt Ruthie's portly figure appeared that minute in the doorway and with beaming face said. "Marsa Gustus down on de porch, honey."

"Mr. Augustus!" exclaimed Mrs. Silveston, sitting bolt upright.

"Yass, hit's dat's gemman, suah—Ha! ha—I clar honey, he sez he kin tak' de hul house dis time, Marsa Knowlby 'jes po'ly." The Indian maiden was hastily collecting the necessary things out of the depths of her closet when Aunt Ruthie further remarked, "Laws! I t'inks Marsa Gustus kinder skeerd ob his job, Leetle Missie; hit am sort ob ticklish hoprashun ter tak de hul house so he sez yo' ole nuss must gwine ter look atar me honey-chile."

Laughing merrily Ronla answered, "I guess Mr. Augustus can manage all right. Hurry down and tell him we will be pleased to go—then get ready yourself; fortunately I am dressed and can assist mother."

"Make haste, mammy," commanded Exilesnest's mistress.

"Gentlemen are not fond of waiting," added her daughter.

"My, Ronla, since when have you become so wise?"

"You will be wise not to hinder me or I might run away without the 'hul' house and elope with 'Marsa Gustus.' Here is your coat and bonnet, I will tie your veil after I pin on my hat."

En route Aunt Ruthie's quaint answers amused the occupant of the rear seat, and when repeated that evening they afforded much amusement in the servant's hall of Mr. Knowlton's home. On their return, when about five miles from Haroldean Hall and farther still from the town of Texum, Ronla Silveston was surprised when Mr. Augustus turned into a beautiful park. As they speeded along they caught several glimpses, through the fine old trees, of Scarraway Abbey, one of the showplaces of that part of England.

Mrs. Silveston was delighted. The beautiful place could hardly have been seen at better advantage, for at that hour the king of day was about to say good night and the shifting lights and shadows enhanced the loveliness of that peaceful, shady park.

The driver of the wheel was amused when Ronla turned and remarked, "Mammy, see that deer under the tree over yonder. My! what wonderful eyes; wouldn't you love to hug her?"

"Sakes alive, Missie Ronla, I's hain't very anxified."

Mr. Augustus laughed quite heartily when mammy

added, chuckling, "Laws, Leetle Missie, Marsa Gustus brung me 'long ter look atar me honey-chile—Ha, ha!—Clar ter goodness—ole folks lik' me doan't run atar witchin' eyes. Suah no! Marsa Gustus knows dem kind of deers stan' no nonsense."

Settling around in her seat she heard Aunt Ruthie remark to her honey-child, "Whar Leetle Missie gits her idees am a caushun, suah."

Aunt Ruthie's young mistress had nothing further to remark on the subject of witching eyes, but after a short silence said, soberly, "I wonder if the ladies of this beautiful Abbey really appreciate this lovely park?"

"I will drive up and ask them, perhaps we might find some more witching eyes."

Ronla leaned over and clutched the arm that was guiding the machine. When the driver of the car essayed to turn toward the Abbey, most pleadingly her eyes sought the face so near her own, and said, "Please turn. I should die of mortification."

Smiling, Mr. Augustus answered, "Round we go, then. I cannot afford to have such a direful calamity happen in this lovely park."

Removing her hand with quite sober face, she said, as she settled back in her seat, "You frightened me sufficiently to have something unusual happen." Adding earnestly, "Surely, I am a fine looking creature to be presented to lords and ladies."

"I agree with you thoroughly." Ronla was rather surprised at his sudden burst of merriment when he further said, "I know they would be delighted to make your acquaintance. You need not look so skeptical, Princess Ronla, I mean it."

It was Mr. Augustus' turn to be surprised when the Colonel's daughter looked askance at him and with the saucy audacity of a school-girl said, soberly, "When did you arrive, Mr. Blarney?"

Ronla Silveston knew nothing of the arts of a cruel coquette, still her simple natural manners and cheery way of viewing things made her quite refreshing and attractive, at least so thought the driver of the car, after meeting so many conniving mothers and frivolous daughters in his travels and even at the shore that very summer.

In reply to a question Ronla, the Injin, added, "Pray, who gave you the privilege of calling me by my first name? Have you forgotten what I told you about heathen Indians?"

"I crave your pardon, Miss Silveston." The speaker's face became very grave when adding, "Since we faced death together, I seemed to feel we were quite old friends. I suppose you think me unwarrantably rude."

Smiles banished frowns, when laughing, Ronla answered, "I will tell you what I will allow you to call me."

Mr. Augustus looked up eagerly and said, "What, Miss Ronla?"

"Plain Injin," answered the audacious maiden.

The Colonel's daughter looked so bewitching that Mr. Augustus would have been happy had he been privileged to snatch the "Plain Injin" to his heart and cover the dainty little mouth with kisses, but instead, half sighing, remarked, "It is impossible to state when I can have the pleasure of another auto

ride, my plans are so uncertain." Adding sadly, "Uncle has been far from well since the second stroke." Noting an expression of deep sympathy steal into his companion's face, he said, pleadingly, "Forgive me for burdening you with my trouble, Miss Ronla."

"It is a great blessing that many of our 'bridges of trouble' disappear like the mist before we reach them." Chameleon-like the speaker's mood changed—grave sadness giving place to lightest of banter when she said, smiling, "I guess you have forgotten my advice."

Ronla's eyes fell, yet she was amused when Mr. Augustus answered, earnestly, "If precious 'Hope' should desert me I should be truly miserable." Under cover of laughter Ronla appeared not to have noticed the deep import of the speaker's words and tone and answered soberly, "We dined at Doctor Mallin's last night; surely mother is having a red-letter week."

"Was Father Newols there to console you for the absence of the hostess' sons?"

Ronla was aware of the fact that Mr. Augustus had turned to attract her attention, but not being willing to allow the speaker to read his answer in her merry, mischievous eyes, she remarked soberly, "No, Mr. Augustus, but we shall need his kindly offices soon if you upset us."

The man at the wheel realized that caution was necessary, therefore with solemn silence they soon passed Haroldean Hall, and before Miss Silveston could become thoroughly alarmed about the steepness of the hill the auto stopped before the deserted cottage.

Mrs. Silveston's kindly words of thanks afforded Mr. Augustus much pleasure and when he grasped Aunt Ruthie's young mistress' hand later, he said, soberly, "'Plain Injin,' take good care of yourself. Will you write me, if I have to go over to the Continent with uncle?"

"Fo' de lan' sake, 'Marsa Gustus,' dat am too momentinous a t'ing to decide widout fustest axin' me ole brack mammy."

Laughing, Mr. Augustus said, "Well, then! Be sure you select in true Japanese fashion the right hour. Remember! do not speak to her in the 'hour of the dog,' if the 'hour of the rat or ox' would be more auspicious for me."

Smiling, "Daddy's Diamond" answered, "I will consult all zodiacal signs before I make my request." Then added graciously, "Give my regards to Janette and Mr. Knowlton."

"I will gladly do so. Good-bye."

Mounting the stairs the Colonel's daughter had another battle to fight, her mother must not be worried over any of her depressed fears or fancies, consequently she strove to remark in every-day tone as she entered her mother's room, "Well! no one ran away with our cozy nest. How did the 'hul' house enjoy the ride?"

Aunt Ruthie smiled and nodded her head, when her mistress answered, "Very much, Ronla. It certainly was a treat."

"Were you afraid, mammy?"

"Afeerd! Laws, honey," answered Aunt Ruthie with pompous importance, "guess Missie Ronlah

fergits dat we trabeled a leetle afore she wuz borned." Mrs. Silveston smiled and she joined in the general merriment when her old nurse added on leaving the room, "You knows dat hit takes mo' dan house-movin' ter skeer yo' ole nuss. Doan't hit, honey?"

Later, Ronla was about to speak, when her mother held up a warning finger as she nodded toward the entry. At that moment Aunt Ruthie's sweet shaky voice was heard singing:

W'en me honey-chile am laughin'
Mammy am cheerified.
W'en me honey-chile in troubl'
Mammy not skeerified:
Fer dis ole nursie wades de wattahs
An' crosses deserts widout falters—
W'en me preshus honey-chile am by me side.
Yass suah!
W'en me preshus honey-chile am by me side.

Two days later Ronla received a short note from Mr. Augustus stating that they were to leave England the following Monday and that he would write again when he arrived at Carlsbad. There was a minor chord of sadness running through Janette's letter on account of her uncle's failing health. There was also a touch of the writer's merry self when she wrote, "Uncle and cousin join in sending regards to all, the latter person requested me to send word to Aunt Ruthie that he will not forget her advice about witching eyes. Ronla dear, my wonderful 'he' is not here, his mother was too ill to travel when we left. Write often. I would be delighted to hear from your mother also, if she will honor such a sad little madcap [uncle's pet name] maiden."

Anxieties entered the rectory and Exilesnest after 'Marsa Gustus' and party left England. Mrs. Silveston contracted a severe cold and her daughter's dear friend came near losing her darling baby. It was a trying time for Dr. Mallin and the rector of St. Jude's—yet despite their home cares they tried to carry a little of the ozone of cheerfulness with them wherever they went. Aunt Ruthie was always pleased to hear their voices at the cottage, especially when her honey-child was confined so many weeks to her cozy home and really needed, what she termed, "a little chirkin' up." Mrs. Silveston was well aware of the fact that Mr. Netherly was most highly esteemed by the old auntie, while his wife and their child truly received the loving homage of her kindly black heart. The poultry and fresh eggs won a place in her affections, too, for her honey-child's generous friends at Mallin Villa.

Janette Knowlton proved to be a good correspondent and her letters were much enjoyed. Ronla treasured Mr. Augustus' interesting, newsy epistle, but was too busy nursing at the time of its arrival to answer and it was postponed for a more convenient season. Mr. Augustus thought perhaps his precious "Hope" was about to desert him when a month elapsed without having received a reply.

Dreary November had passed—the first day of Krissy's month, Nancy Netherly danced into Exilesnest's kitchen, saying mischievously, "The 'whole house' must come to my party or I will be jealous of 'Marsa Gustus.'" Adding soberly, I am so thankful that everybody is well again. Listen, mammy, I am

going to have an evening at home for the church people. Will you help me?" A merry smiling face peeped through the pantry door and said, "Oho, my lady, what mischief are you up to now?" Laughing, Aunt Ruthie answered respectfully, "Thankee, Missie Nancy, I'll comb w'en eber yo' wants yo' ole auntie." The face peeped out again and the same merry voice remarked, "How shocking! a minister's wife actually caught in the act of luring away our maid."

Nancy rushed to the door, capturing the naughty "peeping Tom," kissed her affectionately and said, "Come to the front door with me, I have only a minute. Listen! the parson declares his flock has been dreadfully neglected, so a week from tonight we will be at home, very informally, to every stray sheep in the village. No! do not interrupt, I am delighted, your fine 'black sheep' has promised to help me. Your mother is to have a seat of honor in the cozy corner, near the tea-table, where I expect her daughter to do the honors in most charming, approved style."

Laughing, Ronla kissed her friend, then added with wobegone expression, "But—Nancy, I have nothing to wear at——"

"No buts allowed; it is your duty to help me. I think Donald and Willis will be at home over that week-end, so promise you a couple of beaus."

Ronla answered rather contemptuously, "Beaus! Pshaw!"

Nancy, smiling, added banteringly, "Look out! my lady—or I will write Lord Haroldean you hate beaus."

A sweet gentle voice was heard and Mrs. Silveston

said as she stood at the top of the stairs, "Are you not coming up to see me, Nancy?"

"I am sorry, Mother Silveston, that I have to forego that pleasure this morning. Good-bye, Ronla will explain."

Leaving the porch the rector's wife turned to remark, "Run in, child, it is quite chilly. Come over after luncheon, I want your advice—you know I never entertained stray sheep before. Good-bye again." At the foot of the steps she waved her hand and said smiling, "Remember. Be good—or I will write."

Running upstairs Ronla exclaimed excitedly, "Nancy is going to have an informal evening for the parson's flock; we are to go and our 'black sheep' too." Sliding her arm through her mother's as they entered the room she said, looking quite perplexed, "But—what shall I wear? I am to have the honors of the tea-table thrust upon me."

Mrs. Silveston was silent a moment, then, smiling, answered, "I think I can help my poor little Cinderella with a gown, if not with glass slippers."

The speaker laughed when her daughter exclaimed excitedly, "Hurrah! I've found a fairy godmother."

"No thanks needed, please; you might as well use all my discarded gowns, I shall never wear colors again."

"No rash promises, please."

Mrs. Silveston shook her head and said rather sadly, "Run down to the big jumbo and bring me that steel-gray silk dress and the box of lace, I think the gown can be made to fit you with a few alterations."

In a few moments Ronla returned quite laden. Placing her budgets on a chair near her mother she commenced to disrobe preparatory to donning one of the hidden archives.

The Indian maiden's eyes sparkled with pleasure later when Mrs. Silveston threw a beautiful lace bertha over her shoulder, the tabs of which reached nearly to the end of her demi-train and said, "Wait—I must mark where the sleeves are to be cut off and the neck turned in." Removing the bertha she added laughingly, "You certainly look antique in that waist."

Ronla made a comical grimace at the figure gazing at her in the mirror, then remarked joyfully, "You are a dear, mother, I am glad Aunt Ruthie is an adept in the line of pressing. This is beautiful silk and will look as good as new."

Mrs. Silveston puckered up her face and said, somewhat anxiously, "How many days are we allowed to finish this wonderful creation?"

"The perfect number, mother; surely seven days will be more than sufficient for such skilled artists as we are." Drawing forward a small rocker she further said, "Not a word to Nancy, I want to show her what experts her pupils are getting to be."

The evening of the party, the Indian exiles were the first guests to arrive. Foxgrove's charming mistress exclaimed when her chum friend threw off her cloak, "Why, Mrs. Silveston, I am all in a flutter! You never told me that you intended bringing such a lovely grand lady with you." As usual Aunt Ruthie grinned to hear her young mistress praised and Mrs.

Silveston answered smiling, "That is one of my dresses remodeled. Do you like it?" Then added, "We are learning by degrees, you see."

"By the looks of the gown, I think you are ready for a diploma." Descending the stairs, when passing Aunt Ruthie the sweet mistress whispered, "I am terrible sorry there is not going to be any 'pesky' lords here this evening to see your lovely charges." Mrs. Netherly not being aware of the facts concerning Lord Silveston's treatment of his brother's widow, was therefore surprised that the old auntie did smile in her usual hearty way when she slightly curtsied and said, "Thankee, Misses Nancy." Turning to Mrs. Silveston the hostess said most cordially, "Come, let us hasten down to the library, you must see how lovely your daughter arranged the tea-table." En route the exiles peeped into the parlor—crossed the hall to the library—the portieres were drawn aside under the archway, allowing the guest to see a small polished table, a lace centerpiece and jardiniere filled with variegated autumn leaves. The hostess took general survey of the rooms after Mrs. Silveston was stowed away in a corner, near the tea-table, then remarked with slightly puckered brow, "I do hope there will be enough room for all the flock—if not!—open kitchen door—call me, Ronla, if anything goes wrong." Smiling as she glanced toward the old auntie, who had found a place back of her honey-child's chair, she further remarked, "With so able a coadjutor I think you can manage. If you feel tired——"

"Run along, Nancy, and cheer your husband, he

is walking up and down the parlor like a caged lion."

"You are certainly a comfort, Ronla. Ah—here come Donald and Willis, dear boys. I see it is unsafe for his lordship to remain so long abroad. I must write and warn him."

"Warn whom? most charming hostess," said Donald, gallantly bowing. "Your rector; he may be real naughty and say a few bad words, if you entice me to stay. I must run. I hear a few baa's."

The informal evening was voted to have been an immense success before the Indian exiles left the rectory. The "outriders" escorted the ladies home and to pacify Mrs. Silveston's nervous alarms waited in the library with Ronla until Aunt Ruthie assured her young mistress that no burglars or ghouls had ensconced themselves in the cottage during their absence. This same faithful old auntie carried "the bag," with the added injunction never to go in debt; therefore, when the doctor's family or the rector and his wife were invited to dine with the exiles, she was not able to make any especial fuss in their honor. Mrs. Silveston tried not to bother about the impossible and was pleased when Aunt Ruthie's delicious concoctions were enjoyed by her guests. Ronla and her mother never questioned the old auntie's methods of managing, and cheerfully ate potatoes or bread and molasses if such viands were placed before them the day after the feast.

A week before Christmas Eve the rector and his wife were over to dinner. At the end of the meal Aunt Ruthie was returning from the pantry with

another heaping plate of jumbles when Mr. Netherly turned to his hostess and remarked in a businesslike tone, "By the way, Mrs. Silveston, I met an old friend in London the other day, who wanted to know if I ever heard of anybody by the name of da Spaniola, so I gave him your address."

The speaker was startled by the sound of a heart-breaking moan, then the plate of cakes crashing to the floor added to the uproar. Aunt Ruthie leaned against the doorway for support, a perfect picture of despair and fear. Mr. Netherly was on his feet in a trice; Ronla, too, rose to the emergency saying, commandingly, "Take mother into the library, Nancy, I will attend to Aunt Ruthie." Adding, coaxingly, "Lean on Mr. Netherly, mammy; let him assist you to your big chair in the pantry."

Later, when the rector of St. Jude's passed through the deserted dining room, Mrs. Silveston exclaimed, rising, "How is she?"

"Ronla will be here in a moment, Aunt Ruthie will be all right after she rests a while."

Grasping Mr. Netherly's hand Mrs. Silveston remarked, huskily, "Where is your friend; did he tell you why he wanted us?"

Nancy was somewhat alarmed, rose and led her sweet hostess back to the fireplace. Mr. Netherly followed saying, "All my friend knows is the fact that a man died in a seaman's home, leaving in the nurse's charge——"

Terrible, agonized fear was expressed in the sweet hostess' eyes when she said, clutching Mr. Netherly's arm, "What is the dead man's name?"

"Jess Smithers."

Mrs. Silveston clasped her hands, tears gushed from her eyes as she exclaimed, "Oh! God, I thank thee."

The rector's wife slipped down on the footstool, with heart bubbling over with tender sympathy she stroked the thin white hand she had taken captive and when her esteemed hostess became more composed Mr. Netherly said, feelingly, "The nurse gave my friend this letter. See—it is directed quite plainly, 'Dr. da Spaniola, Richmond Hospital, Virginia.'"

Nancy Netherly was speechless with amazement when her sweet, unruffled hostess actually grabbed the letter and rushed from the room calling, "Here's a letter, mammy. Jess is dead! Jess is dead!"

Ronla placed her mother in a chair, saying, "Give me the letter." Tearing off the envelope she read:

"—deah ruthie gal i felled thro de hatche an broke me back marsa done rite i wuz two cussed low ter hab sech wife an chile bress de Lawd i didn't kill yo dat nite ax yo misses ter fergit me fer frightenin her at de warf yo needs nuffin writ daddy Benchwoods bank hab nuff ter mak mammys last days mo asy I allus lobed yo ruthie fergib dat indie man sez dar iz marcy fer po sinfull critters bress de Lawd cant writ mo."

Tears were streaming down Ronla's cheeks when she read a short note written by the nurse stating that her patient had used almost superhuman efforts to pen the enclosed epistle.

Mrs. Silveston's sobbing caused Ronla to lay aside the nurse's letter and she peremptorily commanded, "Go up to your room and rest a while, mammy. We must not leave our guests any longer."

Aunt Ruthie rose, saying, "Gwine wid Leetle Missie, honey. Jess can't hurt me bressed chile no mo'. Hallelujah! dat am bressin' nuff fer dis ebin."

Nancy and her reverend husband rose to leave when the exiles returned to the library, but the white-faced hostess said, "Please be seated. I am so sorry your visit has been spoiled in this manner." Turning to Ronla she added, "Go gather up the broken china and cakes. Our guests will excuse you."

"Come, Ronla," said Nancy, "it will not take a minute to straighten the dining room; Aunt Ruthie is so faithful she deserves a little spoiling when she is ill."

Mr. Netherly rested in a chair at one end of the fireplace and his sweet, obliging wife seated herself beside him when the dining room was in order and all vestiges of the late breakage cleared away. Ronla took possession of a low footstool between her friend and her mother and remarked, anxiously, "Are you sure, mother, that you are equal to telling us tonight?"

"I am too excited to sleep. It will rest me to talk." Ronla settled back in her favorite position, only this night she leaned against her dear friend instead of the Colonel's Ruby. No one seemed to mind that the library lamp was still a 'deader,' for the earnest gaze of the assembled party was focussed upon the gentle hostess, who, half smiling, said, "Once

upon a time many years before I was born, Aunt Ruthie plighted her troth to the man who died in theseaman's home. Tiring of country life Jess obtained work on one of the Hudson River steamboats. He was away a year and on his return his citified airs and handsome face set all the women's hearts in a flutter and Ruth Stickem was accounted a most fortunate person to have captured the Adonis of the cabins.

"Poor mammy! her marital happiness was as short-lived as the wind flower." Ronla thought the recital of the sad story might completely unnerve her mother and was about to demur to her continuing, when Mrs. Silveston said, more cheerfully, "Things went along well for several months, then in a drunken debauch he nearly killed her one night. Grandfather reprimanded Jess severely and threatened to take his wife away from him if it happened again. Poor man, in six months he received a second warning. Alas! a week later the servants in the cabins were awakened by a succession of terrible screams—then all was still."

"How terrible!" exclaimed Nancy.

"Terrible, indeed," answered Mrs. Silveston. "Jess had beaten mammy until she fell to the floor unconscious." The speaker placed her hand to her eyes a moment as if desiring to brush away a frightful vision, then further said, "The field hands broke open the cabin door and dragged the fighting demon down to the creek and threw him in the water. Later, in a more sober frame of mind, the poor man returned to the cabin to find silence, darkness and emptiness."

The speaker paused and then remarked with a touch of pathos in her sweet musical voice, "Over at the big mansion lights were seen all the rest of the night. There, faithful friends and a physician heroically worked to save mammy's life."

Tears stole down Nancy's cheeks, but she hastily brushed them away so as not to excite her hostess. Ronla and the rector were affected by the sad story, but they, too, remained silent, not desiring to break the thread of the narrative. "Aunt Ruthie never saw her cherub of a son," continued the speaker; "beside the tiny coffin, grandfather pleaded with Jess to change his mad ways and sternly impressed upon him the fact that Ruth could not return to his home until he had abstained from intoxicants for one year. Learning that Jess desired to go seek his fortune in the West, grandfather supplied him with the necessary funds, thinking a change of environment might effect a cure." Smiling, the speaker said, "For Ronla and I the sequel of this story is a happy one. Jess seemingly forgot Aunt Ruthie's existence, consequently she never left 'the Hedges,' for only a month after those terrible screams were heard—I was born."

"Had you not better postpone the telling of the sequel until another time, mother?"

"Keep that naughty child quiet please, Nancy"—laying aside the jesting tone she added, soberly, "We never expected to see Jess again, but after grandfather's death, near the end of the war, he had the effrontery to demand his wife; fortunately father was at home the day he called. After an exciting inter-

view he found mammy clinging to mother's skirts, sobbing in a heart-broken manner. Tears in his wife's eyes always annoyed father, so on entering mother's boudoir he commanded sternly, 'Rise, mammy. Jess has gone.' Then added kindly, 'Trust me, Aunt Ruthie, no one shall take you away from your honey-child if I can help it.' 'Indeed they shall not, father.' To prevent further tearful scenes I took mammy's arm and led her out of the room saying, 'Not another word nor a tear or off you go to Jess.' Silence reigned supreme a moment, then looking up suddenly Mrs. Silveston remarked anxiously, "Have I been troubling my guests unduly this evening?"

"Not at all, Mother Silveston, your story makes me think of the statue of Laocoon."

"Yes, Rolin, undoubtedly drink was truly the serpent that blasted Jess' life," answered the sweet hostess.

"If not too fatigued, tell me the outcome of the investigation."

"Captain Ruling reported it would be a crime to allow mammy to return to Jess, also that a charge would soon be preferred against him by the government. Later we learned of his arrest and sentence for twelve years behind the bars of the St. Louis prison."

"Ah! the way of the transgressor is hard," remarked Mr. Netherly, sadly; "besides the sorrow and disgrace such wrong-doers heap upon their own family."

"Brudder Smithers and his wife were highly esteemed, for their sake I am glad Jess came to him-

self at last. They never upbraided us for protecting Ruth and were most kind to the broken-hearted wife and mother."

Mr. Netherly broke the silence that followed, saying, soberly, "I am exceedingly sorry to bother you further, but it is unavoidable. The superintendent of the seaman's home insists that Jess' wife identify the body before he will allow the bank-book and papers to leave his safe. I will go with Aunt Ruthie." Before Mrs. Silveston could reply, the speaker's attractive wife grasped the troubled hostess' hand and said, pleadingly, "Bring mammy over to the rectory at eight o'clock tomorrow, then you and Ronla will keep the baby and me company until they return."

"That is a fine plan, wife;" then added, "We are forced to leave early; the ten-thirty would be too late. Nine o'clock!" Rising, he added, "These good people will have to be up betimes in the morning." Ronla hugged her friend and whispered when bidding her good-bye, "You are a dear to have us tomorrow. Have the stocking bag handy, you know mother's new hobby." Aunt Ruthie was waiting at the door and said, respectfully, "Heah am de lantern, marsa; doan't fall down dem steps, Missie Nancy. Laws! dis am a brack eben—dat's suah."

The following afternoon, Aunt Ruthie remarked in husky tones, "De Lawd bress yo', marsa, fer yo' kindness to an ole brack mammy."

"Do not trouble to thank me, Aunt Ruthie, you know I count it a privilege to have the opportunity to perform a service 'in His name.'" Smiling, he

said as he lifted his hat, "Look, there is your honey-child at the window."

Aunt Ruthie rested in the entry while Ronla and Nancy were upstairs. Ere they returned with Mrs. Silveston's wraps, Mr. Netherly entered the library and said happily, "We are back safely, you see." Then added gravely, "Aunt Ruthie had no trouble to identify her husband. I committed the poor prodigal's body to the earth." Tears of sympathy gushed from the sweet listener's eyes when the speaker further remarked, "I will never forget the scene at the grave: the old auntie lifted her hands toward heaven and with tears raining down her cheeks reverently pleaded, 'Deah Lawd, ef Iz done wrong ter Jess—fergib me fer thy marcies' sake—we sech frail critters; watch ah-tweenus.' With bowed, uncovered head I added, 'For Jesus' sake—Amen.' " Ronla's mother was deeply moved at the recital—impulsively grasping her rector's hand she said, earnestly, "Oh! how can I ever repay you for your great kindness?"

"Mother Silveston, between friends there are no obligations." Then he added cheerfully, "The nurse found sufficient funds for burial expenses and Aunt Ruthie insisted defraying all expenses of the journey—you see the debt is not great. Here is the check you gave me."

"In this world, Rolin, there are many kindnesses performed which mere money can never repay. Ronla and I will never forget——"

"What will I never forget?"

"Nothing very important, Ronla." In the hub-bub of leave-taking, the rector whispered—"Your

mother needs rest, do not allow any excitement or further edition of mammy's love-dream tonight."

Ronla well understood the long day had fatigued her mother, even though seemingly she had enjoyed it; therefore, when Aunt Ruthie was laying aside her best bib and tucker, she remarked, "Mammy must be tired. Come, let me assist you to prepare for yonder downy couch. We had such a fine dinner we only need something light for tea." A cozy evening appealed to the tired hostess and she was comfortably resting in the midst of a high bank of pillows when the old auntie entered the room with the tea-tray. Aunt Ruthie was seemingly too weary to talk and retired immediately to her room after the few evening chores were finished; nevertheless, despite the harrowing events of the day, the old black heart sang a pæan of praise that poor handsome Jess would no longer "dog their footsteps" and "anxify" her "bressed honey-chile."

CHAPTER XI

MISTLETOE AND A CROWN

DECEMBER was dark and blustery; nevertheless, at the end of the dreary month the needs of Exilesnest were not forgotten, even though, on account of the inclement weather, Ronla and Nancy were not able to join the party who tramped through Texum woods for laurel and holly. Another Christmas Eve was about to be ushered in. Once again the exiled Indian maiden loitered beside the library window to watch the storm, the rain was coming down in torrents and as it fell to the ground the light fall of snow became one glistening sheet of ice. Silence reigned in the unlighted apartment until a sputtering log caused Aunt Ruthie's young mistress to banish her own musing of the past by walking over to the cheery fireplace and remark, "Wake up, fair dreamer. This is the hour you used to read—'Twas the night before Christmas. Oh! how joyous and mysterious it all seemed." Adjusting a low footstool to her satisfaction she further delved in reminiscences of her early childhood and said, affectionately, "Dearest of momsies, even Aunt Ruthie was interested in your stories about the Shepherds and the Wise Men."

"I cotched yo' dis time, Leetle Missie, a talkin' bout yo' ole nuss." Then pretending to be offended

she added as she lighted the "deader," "Hit's scan'hus dat yo' 'lows sech a t'ing, honey."

Mrs. Silveston smiled when her daughter answered, "I think it's 'scan'hus,' too, for you to scold your honey-child when she is just the sweetest—" The old auntie entered into her merry mistress' mood and bowing respectfully answered, "Sakes alive, Leetle Missie, I'll fergib yo', fer dat kind of speechifyin' suahly warms de cockles of dis ole auntie's h'art."

"Sure it is not your funny-bone that needs cod-
dling?"

Laughing, Aunt Ruthie answered, coaxingly, "Come, honey, suppah am sarved. Leetle Missie's funny-bone won't t'ink hit much jokin' ef de cockles ob dat screecher's h'art 'll be ter dum cole ter eat."

Laughing with the abandon of a light-hearted school-girl, Ronla followed her mother to the cozy dining room and when waiting for the serving maid to return from her own domain remarked, regretfully, "I guess Exilesnest will be forgotten this year, mother." Then added, bent on mischief, "Mammy, you were very remiss, you did not jog my memory to advertise for 'unwary angils' this year."

Nodding her head good-naturedly, the person addressed answered slyly, "Marsa Krissy hain't combed yet, Leetle Missie. Honey knows yo' nebber knows w'at dat jolly critter gwinter hab in his jinglin' sleigh kerridge—"

"Has he top for his kerridge to keep things dry?"

"Pokin' fun agin. Laws, honey, yo' ole nuss can't stan' sech doin' a minute mo'."

"Shall I command my naughty child to apologize, mammy?"

"Fo' de lan' sake, honey, w'en yo' gits nonsensical idees too—yo' ole nuss must skeedo—suah," and chuckling happily the much abused auntie left the room.

Mrs. Silveston laughed quite heartily, then remarked, "Mammy is certainly amusing. I hope our friends do not think we allow her too many liberties."

"Nonsense, mother," then added playfully, "The exiles could not live without Aunt Ruthie's funny-bone." Banishing jesting she further remarked, soberly, "I think it is so strange Janette has not written, she is usually so punctual; I hope Mr. Knowlton is not ill again."

"I certainly hope not, daughter."

"Mammy is certainly trying to get us in a gracious mood, so I will give her a good present—chicken and dumpling—a feast for the gods."

A god or an impy ghou! caused Mrs. Silveston to suspend the operation of serving herself, when a sudden loud knock was heard. Aunt Ruthie slyly muttered when passing through the dining room, "Leetle Missie bettah wait befo' she poke fun at her ole nurse—hain't she, honey? I 'clar dat am some pussun, suah."

"I am glad that I did not waste my money advertising."

"Listen, child, who can it be at this hour?"

Ronla's heart gave a great bound of joy when she thought she heard a familiar voice say, "Have you a bite for two hungry tramps?" But when Aunt Ruthie replied, "Go 'round de po'ch to the side kitchen door" her disappointment was quite keen

and she remarked rather curtly when the faithful old servant passed through the dining room, "I do not think it is safe to encourage tramps to come here at night."

Mrs. Silveston looked up surprised and commanded, saying, "Go on to the kitchen, mammy. I will trust you to manage a thousand tramps."

The old auntie replied, "Thankee, misses," and disappeared. A few moments later the Colonel's daughter heard Aunt Ruthie enter the pantry and then thinking that she detected manly footsteps following, she quickly rose and placed herself before her mother's chair to protect her from she knew not what,—when Aunt Ruthie threw open the door and she beheld the smiling face of Mr. Augustus, who came forward hastily and grasped her hand, "Floods have such an inundating effect, Miss Ronla, we were forced to take Exilesnest by surprise."

"Yes! forgive us, ladies," spoke the other gentleman, "for taking such an unwarrantable liberty."

Mr. Augustus bowed low before Mrs. Silveston. "We would not have dared to enter your presence had not Aunt Ruthie declared that her mistress was always kind to poor trampy fellows."

After being assured that Aunt Ruthie had one trait in common with the renowned "Father of his Country," Mr. Augustus joyfully exclaimed, "Say, Pal, our star is in the ascendant tonight. Chicken and dumplings do not often fall to the lot of stray tramps."

Smiling, Mrs. Silveston bade the younger tramp draw two chairs to the table and when obeying her

command, Ronla returned from the pantry with a couple of plates, knives, forks and napkins, saying, demurely, "Aunt Ruthie 'done git strepteros' and her mistress was forced to hire a new maid."

The sweet hostess laughed and remarked when cozily seated around the table, "Cold plates! I guess my new maid is not experienced enough for me to keep long."

Ronla essayed to rise, but Mr. Knowlton turned and said, "Sit down, child, cold plates are good enough for tramps." Aunt Ruthie as usual saved the day by entering the room that moment, carrying on her tray heated plates and several cups of steaming coffee—placing a cup before Mr. Knowlton she respectfully said, "Doan't waits on ceremonies, marsa." Then serving Mr. Augustus, added, "Drink hit, gemmen, hit'll warm de cockles ob yo' h'art an' keep yo' f'om gittin' nemony in yo' chist."

The old auntie grinned when Mr. Knowlton said in drollest manner, "Thanks, auntie." Then turning to Mr. Augustus, he added, "Gee, Pal, your star must be still rising: we are not often honored like we are tonight."

Ronla's face expressed such doubt of the sincerity of the statements that Mr. Knowlton laid all jesting aside and turning gallantly toward his hostess, graciously remarked, "Our veracity is doubted, so we appeal to your clemency."

Smiling, Mrs. Silveston answered, extending her arm, "Will this fork take the place of the king's scepter?"

"It surely will, and now I must try to make even

'doubters,'"—slightly bowing in the direction of the Colonel's daughter,—“understand how truly grateful we feel. We were attempting to walk up to the Hall when your cheery lights proved as alluring as the Lorelei songs—so could not resist.”

The kindly old gentleman laughed when the doubter remarked, “I never knew that the ‘deader’ had such drawing powers before, you had better bid Aunt Ruthie drop the heavy curtains after this.”

Mr. Augustus leaned over toward his hostess, saying pleadingly, “Do not listen to such treasonable remarks, why think of the pleasure you would miss if you debarred such poor victims as we are.”

“I cannot allow you to bother our kind hostess.” Ronla was convulsed with laughter when Mr. Knowlton further said in quizzical tones, “Are the cockles of your heart warm yet, Augustus?” Then he added anxiously as he glanced at the Colonel's daughter, “And your chist quite comfortable, sonny?”

“Entirely so, uncle; surely this piping hot chicken should immune us from whatever ills ‘the flesh is heir to.’ ”

While the little family were still loitering at the table Aunt Ruthie entered the library. By the fuss Mr. Log made when she fed him his supper one might easily imagine that he was infuriated that the old auntie should have had the audacity to disturb his slumbers. Noticing that Mrs. Silveston's old colored mammy later halted in her meanderings before a “deader” Mr. Knowlton quickly remarked, “Kind hostess, may we enjoy the inglenook light alone this evening?”

"Certainly, if you prefer it."

Giving the signal to rise Mrs. Silveston further said, "Mammy, please do not light the lamp this evening." After the old auntie's exit, Mrs. Silveston led the way to the library. The occupants of the tiny fireplace were sputtering, grumbling and altogether making such a clatter that Mr. Knowlton remarked as he seated himself between the ladies, "Your fire-god seems angry, I really believe he feels an antipathy toward hungry tramps."

Smiling, the sweet hostess answered, "Your deductions are wrong, Mr. Knowlton, it is only the great pleasure he feels that they should be willing to honor such an humble abode."

"You would call it a palace," said Mr. Augustus, "if you had been out in that pelting rain, Mrs. Silveston."

"Then I am glad, Mr. Augustus, that the tiny nest of the exiles was close at hand."

Mr. Knowlton claimed the hostess' attention, so Mr. Augustus added, "I was glad, too, Miss Ronla, for I do not think uncle could have mounted to the Hall, I sent Jeffries on alone to acquaint Mrs. Hewlson we would not arrive until later in the evening."

"The apartment of the 'unwary angels' is at your service if you will remain over night."

"Thank you very much, but Mrs. Hewlson will manage somehow to get us there this evening. It is not the distance that is the bugbear but the steepness of the hill—if it stops raining, that might relieve the situation somewhat."

"My! boy, I would be pleased if all my wishes

were granted as quickly as yours. Hark! I believe the rain has ceased."

Mr. Augustus followed Ronla, who walked over to the window, and as she peered out into the darkness, remarked, "Yes, your uncle is right, I believe it has stopped raining."

The person addressed seemingly was not specially interested in the weather at that moment. "Well! Plain Injin, what excuse have you to make for not answering my letter?"

"I wrote Janette all the news and there was nothing left to write, Haroldean Village is not Paris, sir."

"I think you were a very naughty child and I really feel like intercepting Krissy's sleigh, so you cannot have a single present."

Ronla laughed, but they were startled by a voice, saying, in frightened tones, "Honey, come, dar am a most strepterus pussun at de kitchen doah, an' I clar, he doan't 'lieves I tells de truff. Am dey any pesky lawds heah, Leetle Missie?"

Mr. Augustus walked quickly toward the old auntie, saying, "Mrs. Silveston, allow me to manage that 'strepterus' pussun."

Sighing, the old auntie exclaimed, "Thankee, marsa." And after the gallant knight disappeared into the pantry Aunt Ruthie remarked, "Lan' sake, honey, gemmen is kinder handy ter hab in de house atar all, hain't dey?"

Laughing, Mr. Knowlton replied, "I am glad you think so, Aunt Ruthie, now I know your kind mistress will not object to our coming again."

Mr. Knowlton laughed heartily and when turning

to leave said dryly, "Speeks fer thyself, honey, an' yo' ole nuss 'll ramify de bargain dat Marsa Knowlby am allus welcome."

"What about my nephew, Aunt Ruthie?"

Ronla was about to stop the old auntie, when Mr. Knowlton laid a warning finger on his lips as he glanced toward her, so the old auntie shook her head and said, smiling, "Slabes nebber 'lowed ter hab 'pinions, marsa, so yo'll hab ter ax me honey-chile."

"Mr. Knowlton, I hope you will not think Aunt Ruthie very rude, perhaps I should not allow her so much liberty of speech."

"Mrs. Silveston, Aunt Ruthie is never rude nor disrespectful, she is the first old Southern mammy I ever met. Please do not forbid me to talk to her, she is so novel and amusing." The speaker added when his nephew appeared, "What is the matter, boy? Nothing serious, I hope."

"No, uncle, only Lady Bamberry will not be able to come to Foxgrove until the day after Christmas."

"Ah, did Nancy and our good rector accept?"

"Yes—if weather permits."

"We will see to that point if we have to harness a cloud to bring them." Turning to his hostess he further remarked, "Pardon our speaking in enigmas—now for the conclusion of the riddle—Lord Haroldean has placed the old manor-house at our disposal tomorrow, we are to dine at two and we hope you and Miss Ronla will honor us too. See how thoughtful I am. I didn't dare to tempt any of our esteemed rector's flock to foresake St. Jude's on Christmas day. Aunt Ruthie is included in the invitation. Remember——"

"I appreciate your kindness but——"

Ronla smiled happily when Mr. Knowlton answered, "Dear lady, the auto will be here at one o'clock. It will not be the least use to refuse." Then laying aside his bantering tone he remarked quite sadly, "Mrs. Silveston, you will be according me a great favor to accept. It will help us banish many sad memories of other days."

Mrs. Silveston's eyes were somewhat misty and there was a little choke in her voice when she answered, "There is a minor chord in the music of the happy Yuletide for us also. If our presence can lend a slight ray of cheer we will gladly accept your kind invitation. Thank you for sending the machine, it makes our visit possible in this inclement weather."

"Mother is to bring good cheer tomorrow. What is expected from mammy and me, kindly tell me now, so I may know whether it is possible to come."

"Your part will not be very laborious, just look enchanting as night and morning."

"I will do my best, Mr. Knowlton, but I am horribly 'afeerd dat brack nite 'll look de most scrumdiferous.'"

Honk! Honk! sounded quite plainly. Laughing, Mr. Augustus said, "Come, uncle."

"Yes, son." Bowing to the ladies in his courtly way he added, "Fair thoughts and happy hours attend on you until we see you again."

The clock struck nine after Krissy's guests departed and while Aunt Ruthie was preparing her honey-child for the night, the subject of Flora McFlimsy's great burden was fully discussed and Aunt Ruthie found

that she had a pressing engagement to keep the following morning.

The distant click-click of the iron announced the fact that her faithful nurse had not forgotten her early appointment when the mistress of Exilesnest awakened, some time before the hour when her old mammy would knock and say, "Hit's Chris'mus, honey." Resting comfortably Mrs. Silveston's thoughts traveled far a-field on that bright "Day of Goodwill"—tender and sacred were the memories of such seasons at the old plantation and in India with her beloved husband and father. Later, while still treading the shady vistas of the past, the sad widow mingled with the motley, surging multitude in the streets of Bethlehem. Ah, she mused, was not this same day once heralded by the seraphic song of the angels, and the heavens—did they not sing its pæan of praise in the shining light of that wonderful "Star?"

Gathering around her the "mantle of praise for the spirit of heaviness," Ronla's mother rejoiced that down through all the ages, since that memorable night, the Gospel light, as a "star," had guided herself and many weary heavy-laden travelers along life's rugged highway (like the "wise men") to where the Christ Child dwelt. Returning to her present abode the dreamer commenced to fully realize the day's responsibilities with its auto ride and formal dinner.

"Merry Christmas, Mr. Sun," cried a merry voice, "I hope your cheering presence will thaw out the roads, for the Colonel's Ruby goes a visiting today."

"I trust your request may be granted, daughter. Happy Christmas, dear."

"Same to you, mother, I am going to dress at once and surprise Aunt Ruthie."

"I will follow your example, for the morning will pass all too soon if you go over to service."

Later, at the appointed hour, Aunt Ruthie opened the door and said to the waiting footman, "Me Misses am ready, thankee."

Carefully locking the door Ronla hastened after her mother and gave the key to the old auntie for safe keeping. It was a beautiful clear winter's day though quite cool. The little party were well wrapped and as an extra precaution, Mrs. Silveston's lovely features were partially hidden from view by a heavy veil. Yes, they were as comfortable as possible, the car being enclosed. The steep ascent, the noise of the wheels crunching on the icy roads formed more an element of fear than pleasure in the minds of Mrs. Silveston and her dusky maid, consequently Ronla was quite relieved when they arrived in safety at the crest of the hill. Later, when Haroldean Hall came into view, a soldierly figure was seen pacing back and forth on the porch, like a sentinel, with face turned and eyes eagerly scanning the driveway, as if some unexpected danger threatened the fine old mansion from that quarter. The muffled figure proved to be Mr. Augustus and he remarked joyously, "Merry Christmas, ladies," when Jeffries ceremoniously opened the door of the car. The party loitered a moment ere walking up the last series of steps to the marble portico. Mr. Augustus, gallantly assisting Mrs. Silveston, remarked, "I am so relieved that you are here. I had many misgivings after the car started,

and felt that it was quite reprehensible in me not to have gone with Jeffries."

"I am very glad you did not trouble to do so. Your chauffeur was most careful and nothing more serious happened to us, as we climbed the hill, than a few nervous alarms."

Slightly turning to catch the eyes of a certain Indian maiden the sentinel answered jestingly, "'All's well that ends well,' but really, Mrs. Silveston, I do not know what your nurse might have done to me if anything had happened en route. Even Miss Ronla knows I have reason to be afraid, when she was brave enough to stand India's sun and live so many years in a jungle."

Mrs. Silveston and Ronla smiled. The latter's looks belied her words when turning toward her dusky follower she said, "I really approve of your using caution, Mr. Augustus, for I know her to be as ferocious as a Malabar tigress."

Mr. Augustus laughed when Aunt Ruthie chuckled and said half whisperingly, "Laws! Leetle Missie, doan't skeer de marsa, he might be afeerd ter hab dis Injin critter comb into de Hall."

"Mrs. Silveston, I wish there were a few more such critters in the world." Adding solicitously, "Has this climb been too much for you? I should have thought to have had a chair ready."

The mistress of Exilesnest smiled when her daughter took her arm and said, affectionately, "American Indians are not afraid of a few steps. Are we, mother?"

Looking up at her stalwart protector the person

addressed answered, smiling, "I would not dare to answer otherwise than no."

Mr. Augustus laughed when Ronla exclaimed, "Arrant cowardice and a Colonel's wife too." Holding open an outer storm door Mr. Knowlton's nephew remarked, courteously, "Uncle awaits our coming in the hall. Noticing Aunt Ruthie's hesitation the speaker commanded, "Follow your mistress, mammy," then added, cordially, "Ladies, in Lord Haroldean's name I bid you welcome."

The words were commonplace enough, yet Ronla's eyes again fell before the speaker's earnest glance, as he seemed to infer that she was especially welcome. The American Indian was having a hard time to keep her thoughts in order and for a few moments was too bewildered to note who was greeting her mother so cordially and was powerless to speak for a moment when suddenly smothered in a cyclone of hugs and kisses she heard a sweet voice saying, "Oh! you dear! I am so glad to meet you again. We will have to make Santa our patron saint; there must be a certain attraction of gravitation for us in the Yuletide season."

"I think there must be, Janette; Santa certainly deserves to be canonized for allowing me this unexpected pleasure. Why! Dame Rumor reported you were still away."

"I am astonished that you would give any credence to such a fickle, foolish woman."

Ronla raised her hand a moment as if horror-struck at her friend's audacity, saying in mock seriousness, "Oh! be careful, Janette, foolish women sometimes seek revenge."

"I am not afraid," recklessly answered the happy maiden. A pleased expression overspread the dusky features of Aunt Ruthie when Miss Knowlton said, "Your sojourn in India must have endowed you with mystical powers, for your charges are more lovely than ever."

Mr. Augustus joined the little group and said, smiling, "Aunt Ruthie, do not allow the blandishments of this fair maiden to beguile you longer, your mistress and Mrs. Hewlson are waiting."

In passing, Aunt Ruthie noticed Miss Knowlton give her cousin a saucy coquettish glance and heard her whisper, "You, too, Sir Knight, must beware of blandishments, I am thankful Rufus is not here to be tempted."

Mr. Knowlton accorded the ladies a most cordial welcome.

While waiting a few moments at the foot of the winding stairway Ronla had time to note the beauty of the fine old hall in its holiday attire. What a bower of loveliness it seemed with the bright fire burning in the immense fireplace and, oh, that Christmasy odor! how she loved it!

Mrs. Hewlson was polite and attentive; she took Aunt Ruthie in her especial charge after accompanying the ladies to the head of the stairway. Ronla halted on the first landing, glancing in the long pier glasses which adorned the walls, she suddenly leaned toward her mother and whispered, "Punch me, mother dear. Am I the woman that I thought I be?"

It was hard for the Colonel's "Diamond" to realize

that the figures reflected in those shiny mirrors were indeed her gallant father's jewels, not having worn even a touch of color for over two years.

The Colonel's "Ruby" was gowned in black satin en train with just a touch of old lace. The "Diamond" was resplendent in a garnet evening gown; her father had the gown fashioned after the pattern of one worn by a wealthy rajah's daughter; it was really a plain, simple, trained dress with a touch of Indian embroidery on waist and girdle. The color was especially becoming to Ronla and when Mr. Knowlton beheld her with cheeks slightly flushed and eyes dancing with the excitement of the unexpected Yuletide pleasure, he remarked, when walking over to the stairway, "Augustus, you never informed me that we were to be honored with the presence of an Indian princess." Everyone laughed when he pretended to be greatly dismayed and he added, "My! son, I am all in a flutter, do I look all right?"

Ronla laughed too and much to the amusement of them all she demurely said, "Pray, Mr. Knowlton do not make yourself more fascinating or you will banish the exiles to their hilly crest."

Mr. Knowlton slightly bowed as he answered, "Gracious Princess, have mercy! we could not survive such a fate."

Before the party were seated Nancy and her husband arrived and as soon as Nancy came down stairs the butler announced, "Dinner is served."

Janette was a charming little hostess and commanded Mr. Netherly to escort Mrs. Silveston, and turning added smiling, "Cousin, look after Nancy."

Then with merriest twinkles in her eyes demurely said, "Uncle, please have pity on two forlorn damsels."

Mr. Knowlton came forward at once and said with the *sang froid* of a young gallant, "To have such honor thrust upon me is almost too much for an old man. Princess, I am truly sorry for you."

"You need not be, Mr. Knowlton, for Miss Janette and I are the ones who are honored."

Ronla really forgot she was not at home, everything was so informal; of course she had attended too many ceremonial functions at the Government House to be the least embarrassed even if dining in the old historic mansion of a real, live lord.

If joyousness and laughter were accounted chief aids to digestion then that merry party had no need to fear any trouble from that quarter and it was the first time in ten years since Haroldean Hall was the scene of any Yuletide merriment. The guests, after partaking of a bountiful repast, returned to the library where coffee was served to the entire party, as the gentlemen loitered not in the dining room after the fair guests had left the portals of the high vaulted, stately room.

Janette divided the honors of entertaining with the gentlemen, after the coffee tray had been removed by the butler she rose and with a mischievous glance she appealed to her uncle, saying, "Do you think my Lord Haroldean would object if I showed the ladies the art gallery?"

Mr. Knowlton gave his niece a loving look as he answered in a light, bantering tone, "Augustus, what do you think?"

"Nonsense, uncle, Janette knows that Mrs. Hewlson received instructions to place this home at your disposal."

Mr. Augustus' tone was one of annoyance and his face expressed surprise, mixed with merriment when his cousin smiled and said, "Ladies, having his lordship's sanction we will repair at once to the gallery, that is, if you have the slightest interest in old portraits and curios."

Mrs. Silveston answered most graciously, "We certainly have." The entire party rose to follow their youthful hostess, when Mr. Augustus said, "Janette, pray excuse Miss Ronla a few moments. I want her to see a sketch that Mrs. Roland gave me. We will join you later."

Every one laughed when Mr. Knowlton remarked jestingly, "Pray excuse me, too—I await my princess' orders, therefore have to remain."

While Mr. Augustus and his fair guest were busy looking over a portfolio of sketches, the old uncle nodded in his chair and later said in a sleepy tone of voice, much to Ronla's amusement, "Will your gracious highness excuse me a few moments, I am really afraid I shall disgrace myself and lose forever your high esteem."

With a sweet sympathetic expression on Ronla's face and in kindly tone as if addressing her grandfather, she said, "Certainly, Mr. Knowlton, do not allow me to detain you."

Having gained the princess' consent Mr. Knowlton immediately passed through the heavy portiere to a small writing room. Mr. Augustus broke the silence

occasioned by his departure and sighed as he, with worried expression, remarked, "Uncle does not complain, but I can see that he has not the endurance that he had before the last stroke. Janette and I are quite troubled about him."

Noticing his guest's troubled face and look of deep sympathy he quickly tried to turn the subject, and he said in more cheerful tones, "Pardon me, Ronla, Santa will punish me if I spoil your day."

The Indian maiden tried to smile when she answered, though there was a suspicion of mistiness about her beautiful eyes, "There is nothing to forgive, Mr. Augustus, only life at times seems an enigma to me."

"'Into each life some rain must fall' else, Ronla, I suppose our thoughts would never stray toward the Promised Land."

"Yes, Mr. Augustus, we are indeed poor, frail creatures at the best. I know mother and I would have fallen by the way after grandfather left us, had we not kept our eyes fastened on the pillar of fire and cloud." Noticing his guest's agitation and struggle for control, Mr. Augustus quickly turned over to another sketch.

Ronla could scarcely believe her own senses and in surprised amazement muttered, "'A Prince Incog!' Where did you get this picture?" asked the maiden peremptorily.

"I bribed Mrs. Roland, Plain Injin, and only for the sake of some of her numerous heathen was she willing to part with it." A tear coursed unbidden down Ronla's cheek. The sketch brought so vividly to mind the happy days with her beloved grand-

father. Mr. Augustus added remorsefully, "I would not have bought it had I known that it would make you so sad."

"I am glad you have it, if it helped Mrs. Roland." Hastily brushing away the tears, the speaker half smiled and further said, "I painted that picture as a joke for grandfather. Mrs. Roland admired it one day and as a poor little token of our love and esteem I gave it to her the day we left India."

Before Mr. Augustus could reply a low knock was heard and a liveried servant parted the portiere to say, when commanded to enter, "My lord, here is a letter for Mr. Netherly."

"Take it immediately to the art gallery. you will find the reverend gentleman there."

When the curtains again fell into place Ronla Silveston rose and haughtily said, "Mr. Augustus, will you be so kind to tell me who you really are?"

The gentleman addressed also rose and walked over to his fair guest's side as she stood at the end of a harp-shaped piano—but before he replied the youthful mistress of Exilesnest curtly added, "If you are My Lord Haroldean you have been masquerading long enough. Call the auto, please, I suppose—" for a moment her lips twitched as if tears were not far away when she continued, "You think me nothing but a simple country lassie to be played with and insulted." Then overcoming her emotion she drew herself up and with flashing eyes said, "My father, Lord Haroldean, was skilled with a sword and my grandfather with a lancet. I cut this tie of friendship. Go!"

The unhappy Indian maiden was so incensed with

the idea of the supposed indignity perpetrated toward the Colonel's daughter that she forgot for a moment that she was not in her own library at home, then succumbing at last to woman's refuge—tears, to hide her mortification she hid her face in her arms as they rested on the end of the nearby piano.

Mr. Augustus seemed too dazed to speak for a moment, then laying his hand on the bowed head he tried to draw away her hands and said with deep feeling, "Ronla dear, do I insult the lady whom I desire above all things to marry?"

The weeping girl drew away from him and between sobs said, "Go! you deceived me."

The dear old uncle could not stand hearing his little favorite's sobs a minute longer, so he quickly rose from the couch and rushed into the library, flashing a loving glance at his nephew he said curtly, "Stop, you scamp, not another word." Then patting the sobbing girl in a fatherly way said, "Listen, child; you must forgive an old man, I should have advised you before, but, dear, it was a great temptation to gain a friendship for oneself and not for a title alone."

"Uncle, I hear voices, some one is coming downstairs."

Mr. Knowlton quickly snatched a spotless fine handkerchief out of his pocket and said, "There, child, wipe your eyes with this dry handkerchief, they will be here soon."

Ronla quickly reached out one hand and said, "Thank you."

Mr. Augustus and his uncle walked quickly to the

hall, the former said in a surprised tone, "Going, Nancy. Why! how is this?"

"Lady Bamberry has arrived and they have sent for me."

"I am sorry," said Mr. Knowlton, "I must call Miss Ronla."

The young lady herself parted the heavy portiere and smiling bravely inquired, "Do you really have to desert us, Nancy?" Then added mischievously, "Do you think it is safe to remove the restraining influence of his reverence?"

"Much you are afraid of him." In the midst of merry jest and laughter "his reverence" carried off his wife in the auto. Mr. Knowlton watched his little favorite and thought, she is a thoroughbred, bless her! but remarked after the departure of the rector and his wife, "Make your *amende honorable* quickly, I will go upstairs and keep Janette in order."

Nothing loath Mr. Augustus drew Ronla through the portiere and clasping her in his arms said, "You have a perfect right to be angry, darling, but you must forgive me. I love you so dearly—I shall die if you marry Father Newols."

Laughing, Ronla tried to disengage herself from his arms. Ah, the Indian maiden found all too true that Englishmen could be masterful. Then remembering her mother she pleadingly said, "Please let me go up to mother. I do not wish to annoy her."

"I will the minute you tell me that you will be my crown of blessing, that is what uncle always called his wife."

Ronla resisted no longer, but glancing shyly at her

lover's face said, "You had better consider well. Crowns are made of thorns sometimes."

Lord Haroldean kissed the upturned face; saying, "I will risk it, sweetheart, now you can go."

Ronla quickly hastened across the hall to the stairway on the landing where she had spoken to her mother. As her lordly lover gained her side, she said, anxiously, "Mother would be hurt if not spoken to first, please tell your uncle I am Miss Ronla until she knows."

Lord Haroldean risked immediate exposure by stooping to kiss the flushed cheek, then answered, "Darling, I told you once that your commands should be obeyed whether they led to victory or defeat." Snatching Ronla again in his arms she shyly looked up at her stalwart lover. Disengaging herself she started to mount the stairs, saying, "I have changed my mind, my lord, I think defeat would suit you better."

Ronla remarked again as they neared the entrance to the gallery, "Remember, I am Miss Ronla."

Lord Haroldean caught her hand and holding it a second said, "I can remember nothing, but that I have captured the sweetest little lady in the kingdom." Lord Haroldean was discretion itself, nevertheless the mistress of Exilesnest looked questioningly at her daughter. Janette Knowlton was equal to the occasion—she had her own surmises but remained silent—Ronla was demureness itself and devoted herself to examining old pictures and curios. Mr. Augustus had to follow his cousin's lead and was powerless to demur when she monopolized his sweet-

heart's attention the rest of the visit. Later, while resting before a fireplace in a smaller side gallery, they found another beautiful Christmas tree. My Lady Bountiful handed several packages, containing books, bonbons, and several handsome souvenirs of the late trip, to her esteemed guests. Mrs. Hewlson had been commissioned not to allow mammy miss any of Santa's good cheer, but Aunt Ruthie was pleased most when the caretaker of the manor-house spoke of several little incidents of the past when Lady Haroldean was living. Mrs. Hewlson was devoted to Lord Haroldean and for his sake showed every courtesy to the old Southern mammy. Lord Haroldean insisted upon returning with the exiles. In parting he slipped a tiny package in Ronla's hand. His lips were sealed but his eyes tried to flash the message, "I love you, darling," ere he quickly strode happily down the tiny path to the machine.

Ronla Silveston ran upstairs with wildly beating heart, rushed into her comfy room and pulled off the wrapping before lighting the lamp. Finding the box contained a ring and a note, she hastened down to the library and read:

"Darling:

"This ring was once dear mother's, if I find it on your left hand tomorrow morning when I come over to call on your mother I will know you have forgiven me for causing you those tears. God has indeed crowned my life—on my knees tonight I will thank Him for the blessing of your love. May I ever be worthy of such a gift.

"Devotedly,

"A. H."

Ronla Silveston started at every footstep or sudden noise—like a naughty child she hid the note and jeweled casket in her pocket and slowly mounted the stairs.

CHAPTER XII

SHOCK AND CHANGES

MRS. SILVESTON was truly weary with the auto ride and the numerous excitements of the day. Entering her mother's room the flustered maiden remarked in tones of surprise, "Going to bed."

"Yass, Leetle Missie, me honey-chile am jes clar wo' out."

"I will follow her example and don a kimono, Exilesnest will not be disturbed by guests tonight."

"W'at am Missie Ronlah be a prognosticatin' yit, honey."

"You needn't smile, mother, it is not difficult to prognosticate when I know Nancy is housed with guests and the doctor's family away."

It was Ronla's turn to smile when Aunt Ruthie remarked quite soberly, "Dem trampy fellahs am pokin' round yit."

"We are safe from their incursion tonight."

"You speak very confidently, daughter."

Ronla laughed and ran into her room. Aunt Ruthie remarked, "Thar now, honey, yo' looks comfy. I's nebber git no mo' Pariseen fineries. Laws no! so am gwine ovah and take off me best bib an' tuck afore I brung yo' suppah."

Later, Ronla pushed aside the small table, rang for their maid and seating herself on vacated chair

beside the bed remarked, excitedly, "What do you think of this—for a present?"

Mrs. Silveston sat bolt upright in bed, gazing at the gift in her hand, cried, "Where did you get it, child?" Aunt Ruthie entering the apartment at that moment, exclaimed in vexed tones, "Skeeryfyin' me honey-chile. What am yo' doin', Leetle Missie?" Coming nearer the bed she started back muttering, "Lawd ha mussy! dat am de ring." Noticing her nurse's agitation, Ronla remarked kindly, as she affectionately laid her hand on the old auntie's arm, "Listen, mammy, the ring mother holds was given to me by Lord Haroldean. He is coming tomorrow to see mother." Tears were in the speaker's eyes when she rose and added, pleadingly, "Please make your honey-child lie down, she will have another cold."

Much to the old auntie's surprise Mrs. Silveston pushed her away saying sternly, "Who is Lord Haroldean?" Then sobbing she added, "I never thought my daughter would deceive me."

Greatly alarmed, Aunt Ruthie leaned over the bed, speaking as gently as if soothing a fretful child, "Honey, doan't broke me ole h'art, Leetle Missie nebber hidid anyt'ing, laws no!"

Refusing all overtures for her comfort, the old auntie gathered her honey-child in her arms and sitting on the bed, pulled up the covers and motioned her young mistress to speak. Ronla was truly grateful to the old nurse and said, pleadingly, "You must not be angry, mother, I did not know myself until this afternoon, that Mr. Augustus was Lord Haroldean."

Mrs. Silveston gasped—"Mr. Augustus! Lord Haroldean!"

"Bress de Lawd, honey," exclaimed Aunt Ruthie, "yo' ole nuss knowed dat Leetle Missie nebber hided t'ings an' Marsa Doctah knowed hit. Yass, de same, so he did. Laws, honey, am yo' ole nuss dreamin' agin. I jes' t'ink me old h'art 'll bust—Ha, ha, Marsa Gustus' a pompey lawd!" Nodding her head, she added, emphatically, "Law, me jes' guess 'Marsa Gustus' lawd hain't marryin' any po' white trash eben ef de Kulnel's fambly nebber t'ink dem good nuff ter 'sociate wid."

Ronla laughed and her mother burst the bonds which enchained her and with outstretched arms cried, tenderly, "Come to your naughty mother, child, forgive—Oh! forgive me for not trusting you."

Disengaging herself from her mother's embrace Ronla said, smiling, "Aunt Ruthie, arrange mother's pillows, I refuse to forgive unless she lies down."

"Yass, honey, mind. I's jes dyin' ter heah 'bout dat ring."

Laughing, Ronla sat down on the foot of the bed and said, "There is not much to tell about that ring. It once belonged to Lord Haroldean's mother and he left it in my hand when he bade me good night." Noticing that Aunt Ruthie was about to lift the tray, she further remarked, "Please sit down, mammy, the dishes can wait, I have another surprise. Mr. Knowlton is Lord Scarraway and lives in that beautiful Abbey."

Mrs. Silveston smiled when her old nurse, exclaimed, "Krissey jes' soddin' t'ings topsy-turvy dis day. honey."

Ronla was used to Aunt Ruthie's ways and as her

mother remained silent continued, saying, "Lord Haroldean expected to have spoken first to you, mother, but a forgetful servant upset all his calculations by entering the library after you left and said, 'My Lord.'" The old mammy's eyes were getting larger and larger as her young mistress proceeded to narrate the events of that memorable afternoon. Ronla paused until the clock struck seven, then remarked, "I was so shocked and angry that I forgot entirely that I was not at home. Mother, what do you think of poor little insignificant me telling Lord Haroldean—to 'go'? I declared too that I was the daughter of a colonel and the granddaughter of a surgeon, therefore I would cut the tie of our friendship, and added also, 'Go! you deceived me.'"

Aunt Ruthie clapped her hands and Mrs. Silveston laughed when her old nurse exclaimed, "Law! play actors couldn't hab done better dan dat. Oh, honey, Daddy's Diamond no himotashun. Bress her." Rising and picking up the tray, the old mammy leaned over the bed, her dusky face was suffused with what she termed 'a bunch ob smiles' when she remarked quite joyously, "T'ink, honey—Lady Harrydean, bress us—I knows de Kulnel sez yass ter Marsa Gustus." Neither Mrs. Silveston nor her daughter could resist mammy's low chuckling laugh when she remarked, "Fo' de lan' sake! Honey, yo' ole nuss hab ter larn a few mo' lessons an' be karful—now she hab ter waits on lawds and ladies. I clar—me ole h'art's in sech a flutter dat I's afeerd I brake dese dishes; fer—lan' sake! sech auspiscy news am dreffl' upsettin'." The old auntie finally left the room

after congratulating her young mistress and declaring that 'Marsa Gustus' lord was a 'fine gemmen' and as a parting thrust added, "Clar ter goodness! hit makes me funny bone feel quar." The old auntie laughed so heartily the dishes chinked each other as she walked out to the entry and Ronla, the Indian maiden, heard her mutter, "My! Marsa Gustus a pompey lawd an' gwine ter marry Missie Ronla. Wonder ef any fairies libe on dis hill, fer suttinly dese doin's am de most unspectified t'ing I eber heerd on—Marsa Gustus a pompey lawd. Ha! Ha! Ha!"

About quarter of nine Aunt Ruthie returned from below stairs and said as she entered the room, "Ebry-t'ing all right, Leetle Missie. Sakes alive, Missie Ronlah, leab sompin' fer ter morrow. Laws, honey, dem lawds am comin' in de manin'." There was the merriest twinkle in mammy's eyes as she looked down at her honey-child and added, "I guess Leetle Missie gwinter lobe ole Krissy atar dis, won't she, honey?"

"I trust she may, mammy."

"Ronla, I want mammy to rub my head a few minutes, then I shall try to sleep." Smiling she looked earnestly into the happy face bending over her and added, "Yes, we must gather a few beauty roses, for Exilesnest is to be honored tomorrow."

Ronla laughed heartily when Aunt Ruthie exclaimed, "Dat's right, honey, but ter tells de truff dis ole nuss kinder dispinted dat Marsa Gustus hab ter spile hisself ter be un dem pompey lawds,—spose now we won't heah dat 'fectshus laugh no mo'."

Mrs. Silveston tried to allay the old nurse's fears,

but she still kept true to her first opinion that a title would spoil Missie Ronlah's knight errant, still despite her firm convictions when pleading before the mercy-seat that blessings might be showered on her honey-child and her adored young mistress, she asked God to bless Marsa Gustus, too, even if he was a pesky, pompey lawd.

Precisely at eleven o'clock Lord Haroldean stood on the porch of Exilesnest awaiting an entrance. Aunt Ruthie, in spick and span apron, threw open the door and with low curtsy politely answered the visitor's inquiry, "Yass, me lawd, me honey-chile am in. Walk in 'de li-bry. Sah."

Lord Haroldean was highly amused, and laughing remarked most kindly as he laid his hand on the old nurse's shoulder, "Plain Marsa Gustus pleases me most, mammy."

"Thankee, marsa, I's terribl' skeerd fer I's hab sech fo'gettery fer folkse's names. Mak' yo' self comfy, marsa, I'll notifies me honey-misses yo' am heah."

Ronla was wondering what was happening when she heard that 'fecshus' laugh and Mrs. Silveston could not forbear a smile when Aunt Ruthie said, "Honey, me lawd hab come. Bress him, Leetle Missie—fer he sez he's jes plain Marsa Gustus ter dis ole auntie. He no pompey lawd. Hallelujah! Laws, honey, yo' looks scrumtified nuff. I's gwine down an' tells marsa yo' am comin'."

Lord Haroldean came quickly forward to meet Mrs. Silveston and as he held her hand in tight grasp he looked into her eyes and said, most pleadingly, "Am I to be forgiven, Mrs. Silveston?"

Ronla's mother smiled and in bantering tone answered, "I am afraid it is too late to say nay now. My lord, I am perfectly helpless after your masterly coup in getting possession of the heart of Daddy's Diamond."

Lord Haroldean laughed as he seated his hostess in her usual nook beside the tiny fireplace, then drawing a nearby chair he said as he sank into its comfy depths, "Mrs. Silveston, I know I deserve a reprimand, and any *amende honorable* you desire I will perform, but please do not send me after the Golden Fleece, it would take too long."

"Lord Haroldean."

The person addressed raised his hand saying, "Pardon my interrupting you, but no title, please, just plain Augustus." The mistress of Exilesnest was greatly touched when he stooped to take her hand a moment and there was a pathetic sad note in his voice when he said, "Mrs. Silveston, my mother died when I was sixteen, and I have never yet gotten over longing for her presence, so please be good to me for her sake."

Tears stood in Mrs. Silveston's eyes when she lovingly answered, "We need each other, son, for life has many heartaches." And as if sealing a compact she kissed him and in that act titles were forgotten and she felt that her daughter's marriage presaged a gain and not a loss and that Lord Haroldean was worthy to have the custody of her dear husband's sparkling gem.

After a slight pause, my lord said, "Mrs. Silveston, I used to watch for your daughter when she strolled

across the park in India, and after I met her I thought I would see if she would care for myself alone. No doubt you think this a silly, puerile notion, but now, I am happy to have a title and wealth to bestow upon her." Leaning again towards his hostess he pleaded as he grasped her hand, "Please do not be shocked, I suppose I am about to make an unheard of request, but on account of Janette's marriage I crave your consent to marry Ronla in two weeks."

"Two weeks!" the tone used by Mrs. Silveston implied she thought Lord Haroldean had taken leave of his senses.

"I am not surprised that you think I am seeking disaster in marrying in haste, Mrs. Silveston, but you are aware that uncle has had two strokes, therefore he cannot be left alone or worried over the details of Janette's wedding arrangements, so I planned to have our wedding and two weeks' trip on the continent, then we could all be at the Abbey to assist Janette, who leaves her uncle's home in six weeks, if all goes well."

"Have you spoken of this to my daughter?"

"No, Mrs. Silveston, I have not yet had an opportunity."

"No doubt you are aware, Augustus, that Ronla must be married most quietly and that a large wedding is an impossibility in our present circumstances."

"If it were my prerogative to make a decision in this matter, such a one would be my first choice, so whatever you and Ronla desire will be perfectly satisfactory to me, only place the happy day not too far distant."

"Augustus, perhaps we had better call Ronla."

Mrs. Silveston essayed to rise, when Lord Haroldean was upon his feet saying, "Please do not bother, I will bring her."

Mrs. Silveston smiled as she rested back in her chair, when she heard his lordship call as he stood at the foot of the stairway, "Ronla dear! Come, I want you."

Aunt Ruthie's young mistress came hastily to the stairway and looking over the railing, said, "Here I am; what can I do for your lordship?"

"Come down please, your mother wishes you to attend a council of war."

"I am no Joan of Arc, you do not need me."

Lord Haroldean refused to parley and with a bound he caught the hands resting on the railing; holding them tightly so she could not escape, he led her to the top of the stairs, where he snatched her to himself in close embrace and kissed the flushed happy face ere hurrying down the steps. Still clinging to Ronla's hand her lover exclaimed when entering the library, "Here is your naughty child, Mrs. Silveston."

"Come, Ronla, sit here beside me on the footstool, your lover desires to claim his bride in two weeks; what have you to say, dear?"

Lord Haroldean laughed at the look of astonishment on his fiancée's face and without the slightest hesitancy she said rather decidedly in a tone which precluded the possibility of further argument, "Mother, you surely know that it would be perfectly impossible."

Mrs. Silveston rose quickly and laying her hand

on the shoulder of her son to be said in a most affectionate tone, "Please do not rise; talk it over with Ronla, she alone can decide, I understand your reasons for hastening your wedding day."

Lord Haroldean thanked Mrs. Silveston and after he returned from escorting her to the foot of the stairway he pleaded his case in such forceful, glowing terms, he won a glorious victory and it was adjudged that a trousseau was a thing not to be considered as an impediment to an early wedding, therefore was ruled out. Ronla laughed in her sweet musical way when his lordship gathered her more closely in his arms as they rested on the tiny sofa and said, "I do not care what you wear, this dress would suit me perfectly. Darling, whether you wear silk or gingham on our wedding day, I shall be happy, for the heart of my precious Indian maiden is pure gold."

Ronla demurely answered, "Postpone your decision in the case for a year, my lord, it really would be more wise. Do not forget Indians are very treacherous creatures."

Mr. Augustus silenced the sweet mouth with kisses and said, tenderly, "While I possess your love, sweet-heart, I am not afraid of the future."

Laughing, Ronla remarked, "Hark, some one is coming up on the porch," and hastened over to her mother's chair.

Lord Haroldean followed, standing erect beside the fireplace. Aunt Ruthie passed through the secret passageway to answer the ring of the knocker, then, rapping, parted the portiere to say, "Marsa Gustus, de kerridge-car am heah, sah."

"All right, mammy, thank you."

Lord Haroldean would be forced to remain away several days on account of the sudden turn of events, consequently, with alacrity, accepted his sweetheart's invitation to return at five and remain to dinner.

Aunt Ruthie announced that luncheon was ready after Lord Haroldean left and mounted the stairs to call her mistress. Ronla waited for her mother and on entering the dining room remarked, "Mother, Lord Haroldean will dine with us tonight." The old auntie chuckled happily when her young mistress added, "I give you permission to sell the princess' ring, if funds are low, mammy."

"Laws, Lettle Missie, we nebber hab Krissy's dinnah yit—suah de Marsa Doctah's gobbler good nuff fer pompey lawds, hain't hit, honey?"

"Indeed it is, mammy."

Ronla turned toward the old auntie and said, "Marsa Gustus will be pleased with whatever you have. I was only joking, mammy." Laughing merrily she added, "They say when people are in love they do not need much food—do they, mother?"

Ronla's mother answered, smiling, "I am rather inclined to be sorry for Augustus—for this is your second helping to this peach jam."

Bubbling with mischief Ronla said, "Woe unto us, mammy, I see your honey-child has sworn allegiance to our morning invader."

"Bress de Lawd, she hab, Lettle Missie. Hit's dis ole nuss' 'pinion dat Marsa Gustus desarnes hit, dat's suah!"

"I never thought," exclaimed the dauntless maiden,

"that I should be deserted by my very own—now the only course open to me is to subjugate that invader myself." Laying aside the jesting tone she further remarked, "Mammy, please use mother's very 'best-est' tea cloth this afternoon."

Ronla never heard her mother laugh so heartily since her father's death as she did when Aunt Ruthie on leaving the dining room made a most elaborate curtsy saying, punctiliously, with most sober face, "Me lady hab spoke—I clar!" Mimicking their agent, she added solemnly, "Han 'er horders shall 'ave personal 'tention." Laughing, Ronla glanced around the library to note if everything was in its usual order. The Indian tea-table (*à la barrel*) still occupied the same position of honor when she ran upstairs to don the steel-gray silk gown which she had worn at Nancy's 'At Home.' Later in the afternoon Mrs. Silveston held out her hand when she entered her room and said, tenderly, "Ronla dear, here is something that I wish you to have; treasure them, child; that bracelet your father gave me when you were born and the ruby pin to match a year later."

Before Ronla took the jewelry, she gave her mother a great bear hug and said in her demonstrative way, "Oh! you blessed dear! Are you sure you care for me to have them?"

There was a mistiness about that "Sweet Ruby's" eyes when she answered, affectionately, "Yes, darling, wear them today; my days of appearing in jewels have past. I am getting old."

Kissing the speaker again, Ronla answered, "No! No! Mother, I will not listen." Rising and walking

over to the dressing table with the treasures, in a moment she exclaimed, joyously, "Look, Ruby darling, how do you like the effect of your gift? 'Laws! hain't yo' chile a picter?'"

Mrs. Silveston smiled and answered, earnestly, "They look well and give you the needed touch of color." Adding playfully as she rose to get the velvet case. "Lay this in your drawer, child, I have no hankering for 'the flesh pots of Egypt,' Daddy's Diamond is the only jewel I need." The person named almost smothered the speaker again with kisses and hugs until Mrs. Silveston merrily cried, "Have mercy, child, mammy has not time to dress my hair again now. Hark! There's the knocker! Quick! run down in the library and save Aunt Ruthie the trouble of coming upstairs. Dear soul, she is getting old and we must try and save her when we can."

Obedient to her mother's behest, Ronla hurried to the head of the stairway and softly called, "Mammy, please wait a minute until I run down to the library." With heart all in a flutter of excitement, Ronla stood over beside the fireplace and was surprised to hear a jumble of voices instead of only her lover's, but the mystery was quickly solved when Janette rushed into the cozy apartment, laughing joyously, inquiring, "Where have you hidden my Indian princess?" smothering the bride to be with kisses and holding her captive in her arms. Lord Haroldean followed his uncle and laughingly remonstrated, saying, "Have mercy, Janette."

"Yes, child," remarked Lord Scarraway, "Kindly allow her new uncle the honor of an audience."

In the general hubbub and laughter Mrs. Silveston entered the room and insisted upon Janette and her uncle remaining to tea. That moment Aunt Ruthie, in holiday attire, pushed aside the portiere to place the tray laden with tea and some fresh baked jumbly concoctions upon that wonderful tea-table.

Ronla was surprised at the unusual glitter of silver, but walked immediately over and occupied the vacant chair. Lord Haroldean followed in her wake to assist his sweetheart in her pleasurable duties. Aunt Ruthie in her snowy apron and bright shawl and bandanna stood respectfully back of her young mistress, ready to obey her slightest command. Once when returning from the pantry to replenish the cake plate the ring of the knocker sounded and a cheery voice said when the dusky maid opened the door, "Good afternoon, Aunt Ruthie, will your kind mistress have pity and give me a cup of tea."

"Indeed she will, sah. Plaze walk rite in, Marsa Parsun."

Mammy stood respectfully by, while he divested himself of his outer wrappings and was amused at his look of surprise when he beheld the assembled company, but in his genial, kindly way he stepped forward to greet his hostess and said, "Am I trespassing, Mrs. Silveston, shall I retire?"

"Indeed you shall not, Mr. Netherly, no one could be more welcome."

At this juncture, Lord Haroldean leaned over Aunt Ruthie's young mistress and whispered, "A reverend indeed; what hindereth us tying the knot at once?"

Ronla laughed happily as she glanced a moment into her lover's mischievous eyes, ere remarking, "Avaunt! Sir Tempter, his reverence is pining for a cup of tea, I have treated you far better than you deserve."

"His reverence" believed in Priscilla's advice to speak for himself and now came forward to greet his wife's dear friend and claim from her hand a cup of that non-intoxicating beverage.

Later, Lord Scarraway claimed a like favor and joined the little circle around the tea-table.

Janette in her charming saucy way exclaimed, as she smiled at her hostess, "Who is going to have mercy on two forlorn damsels?"

With alacrity the rector of St. Jude's answered, "May your humble servant be thus honored," taking the seat just vacated by Lord Scarraway.

When Aunt Ruthie retired with the tray the rector rose to make his adieus and Miss Knowlton following his example mirthfully said, "Come, uncle, where his reverence leads, we must follow, if we wish to keep the good will of your crusty nephew."

Despite the remonstrances of the sweet hostess and her daughter, they also took their departure and when Mrs. Silveston mounted to her room she heard her daughter's merry laugh. Lord Haroldean, clasping the happy maiden in his arms and kissing her, whispered, "Why did you try to detain them. I do not believe you love me at all, you bewitchin' Injin?"

"Would you have been pleased to see me act rudely to your own, when they are so lovely to me?"

"You are right, darling. My, I guess I had better

behave or you might change your mind. Oh, sweet-heart, if you ever did that it would be far worse than recovering from an operation by the dusty wayside. Are you sure you love me, Ronla?"

"Yes, Augustus, but I little realized that afternoon when in jest I named your picture 'A Prince Incog' that I should ever meet you. I hope father and grandfather know how happy I am."

Aunt Ruthie coughed, which amused Lord Haroldean immensely, then with a little knock parted the portieres to say, "Dinnah am sarved, sah, 'cuse me 'till I calls de misses."

Cupid's sway is all powerful, but Aunt Ruthie's concoctions were so deliciously tempting she scored a victory over the blind lad. They had a merry, enjoyable time and Mrs. Silveston was not allowed to retire to the solitude of her own room until Aunt Ruthie was through with her various evening chores and able to bear her company.

Lord Haroldean left quite early and at half after ten all lights were extinguished and silence reigned supreme in that tiny nest on the hill.

Ronla did not see her gallant lover until the following evening. The little family of exiles were to be quite busy planning and overhauling the "archives" in those stowaway trunks.

After luncheon Aunt Ruthie, laden with several neatly wrapped packages, accompanied her young mistress down the hill to a certain village dressmaker. On their return Ronla left her duenna at the gate of the rectory as she desired to see her friend and inform her of the happenings of the last few days.

The happy heathen Injin walked, as usual, in the door on the side porch and said, as she waited in the hallway, "Anybody at home?"

To her surprise the door of the rector's study opened. Mr. Netherly, smiling, came eagerly forward, saying, "Ronla, wife is in the nursery." Then as he held her hand, much to her amazement he further remarked, "So somebody has gotten his heart's desire? I certainly wish you great joy, child. I think your father would willingly give his consent to this marriage." Tears came unbidden to the eyes of the Colonel's daughter when he further added, though she tried hard to smile, "God grant that you may be as happy as we have been, in your new life and may your sweet Christian spirit still lead you on to high and noble actions."

Footsteps were heard on the stairs and when Nancy's sunny face appeared and spied the little tableau in the hall below, she cried, "Off to your den, Sir Priest, you ought to be ashamed of yourself." Then running down to meet her friend she added, "Come, sweet ladybird, with me. Hark! I declare even my precious babe is crying because her auntie is going away."

In a sisterly affectionate manner she wound her arm around Ronla and together they walked upstairs to the nursery. Nancy was most interested in every little detail of the coming nuptials, but when the hall clock struck half after four Ronla rose and said, "Call Maggie, Nancy, and walk over with me; the fresh air will rest you; mother will need a 'little chuckin' up' by this time and Aunt Ruthie is always ready for 'unwary angels' at this hour."

Nancy obediently called the little English maid and on the way out knocked at the rector's den, but receiving no answer she joined her friend at the door. They chatted merrily as they walked briskly up hill to the tiny home of the Indian exiles.

When Ronla entered the house with a key Mrs. Silveston called, "I am so glad you have come, dear, and Nancy, too; how nice!"

The bright little mother prevented Mrs. Silveston from rising by stooping over to kiss her and laughed, when she half playfully said, "You are as welcome as the flowers in May; it has been quite a long afternoon."

"What nonsense, mother, mammy was not away an hour, I told you I should not have taken her with me."

"Of course it was foolish, I know, but it is the first time I ever remained alone in the house, somehow it seemed queer and uncanny."

"Really. did any lords or spooks appear to frighten you?"

"No, child, but expecting the knocker to sound made me nervous and I was rejoiced when I saw my dear old black sheep trudging up the hill."

"What a nervous little momsey. Listen, Nancy, I wish to register a vow, I will not leave mother alone again if I go to the altar in a calico gown."

Mrs. Silveston smiled and said, "Nancy, reason with the child; no wonder that I am a fretful invalid with so much coddling."

"Forgive me, Mrs. Silveston, if I assist Ronla to keep her vow."

Aunt Ruthie appeared with the tray, in consequence thereof the subject of coddling was pushed into the background and the all-important topic of wedding arrangements appeared upon the tapis. Before the tray was removed Mr. Netherly came to seek his wife, when the hostess rose to greet the newcomer, Nancy exclaimed, "You are just the one we want to see, dear, we are discussing the wonderful wedding. Get out your notebook at once."

"Well, Ronla, see how obedient I am." Then added, "What shall I write?"

"The meeting is adjourned for the present," handing her rector a cup of tea the person addressed added, smiling, "Whenever your wife becomes too 'strep-terus'—come to me."

"Ho! my lady, Lord Haroldean must be warned of this conspiracy," said Nancy laughing.

Later, the discarded notebook was brought into requisition and first item read—"A private wedding on January the fifteenth at high noon." Nancy gave her husband a loving tap on the shoulder and he inquired, "Does the word, private banish my wife and daughter?"

Ronla grasped her friend's hand and answered, as she glanced toward the writer, "Reverend sir, I register another vow. Listen! If his lordship refuses to allow them to be present, I will banish him to the wilds of India and remain an old maid." Then she added soberly, "I have been thinking that my Sunday-school scholars, the Juniors, and Jane at 'The Blossoms' might like to see me married. Mother and I would prefer a perfectly quiet wedding, but——"

"Item two." Mr. Netherly smiled, saying, "'buts are eliminated, here goes—" and wrote, repeating aloud, "Open church or not, at her ladyship's pleasure."

Ronla seemed perplexed, then said, "I do not suppose it would hurt me for the villagers to witness the service. Mr. Netherly, I leave such arrangements to you and Nancy, do what ever you both think best."

The rector answered, "Lady Haroldean built the church, Ronla, and I know her son's wedding could not fail to interest the simple villagers, besides, today I have heard nothing but the most kind wishes for the lady of his choice. Now, listen, codicil to item two reads,

"Church open to all well wishers."

"Item three, please."

"Decorations—Christmas greens."

"Next—?"

"The next is rather personal, will you kindly sell a bond for us?"

Mrs. Silveston smiled and as she cast a most loving glance toward the Colonel's picture said, "Pardon interruption, but previous items will be useless if my lady has no gown, so I will be greatly obliged if you can assist us in procuring a trousseau or I cannot answer for the direful consequences."

Ronla blushed rosy red and they all laughed when she exclaimed, "The direful consequences would be mother's pride. Why, Augustus would marry me in a gingham gown," then added rather confused, "at least that is what he told me."

Nancy turned and drawing Ronla toward her whispered, "Of course he would, dear, and I do not blame him either." Then added aloud, "Mr. Parson will sell the bond though, for Daddy's Diamond is just going to look so 'scrumdified,' that all need dark glasses to view her dazzling loveliness."

The rector rose, saying, "Come, dear, it's little Ronla's bed-hour, we must hasten home at once."

Nancy kissed her sweet hostess and said, "Let us help you in whatever way we can."

"Yes, Mother Silveston, please do not worry about anything," added her reverend husband.

Ronla mischievously remarked, "How splendid! our rector's wife allows us the privilege of consulting her husband. Now I know everything will pass off without a hitch."

"Laugh away, my lady, you may have to ask privileges some day. Good night."

That evening Lord Haroldean found his fiancée awaiting his coming in the library. Ronla was amazed when her lover said. "So Cousin Nancy was over at the tea hour."

"Cousin Nancy; who do you mean?"

"Then my sweet cousin has never boasted of her high connections?"

"What high connections, Augustus?"

"I was only joking, darling, but in very truth Nancy is my second cousin."

Ronla demurely answered as she lifted her eyes a moment to look at her lover, "No wonder that I loved her so dearly."

For such daring Ronla had to pay the penalty of a

kiss and as she rested in her lover's arms, he remarked, "We all love her, too, dear. Her mother was greatly shocked when she refused a duke and insisted upon marrying our good rector; she never would have won the battle had not her doting father espoused her cause. Lord Bamberry told me there were enough titled people in their family and that Nancybelle must be allowed to be happy in her own way."

Ronla was too interested to interrupt her lover so after a slight pause he further remarked, "Nancy completely won mother's heart and when the church was built she offered the living to her fiancé and never regretted her choice. When the rectory was finished they were quietly married. Mr. Netherly was well born, but dependent upon his own exertions. Ronla, do you think she has any regrets?"

"What a question! Augustus; you know she is as happy as a queen in her home and a noble help-mate in her husband's life-work."

"I am glad you think she is happy, I was rather inclined to disagree with mother at first and felt she was throwing away her chances for a fine establishment."

Ronla withdrew herself from her lover's embrace saying, "Well! my lord, why do you throw away yours? It is not too late yet——"

The mouth of the sweet Indian maiden was closed with a kiss and he tenderly remarked as he drew Ronla toward him, "Why, darling, just because you bewitched me with your Indian arts, and I cannot help myself. Poor me! I know every one pities me too."

Later, Ronla broke away from her lover and ran upstairs, and said on entering her mother's room, "Come, put down your book, mother, another council of war is about to convene and his lordship demands your immediate presence." Then she playfully added, "You had better come quickly or else you will be subpoenaed by an officer of the law. Hurry, I am crazy to learn the outcome of this trial."

The mistress was led to the fiery bar of justice. The flaming jurymen were anxious to learn what manner of a case the fair prisoner's might be and listened intently when his lordship addressed the court and said, "On account of a certain estimable lady's inability to successfully manage the cottage of Exilesnest after Aunt Ruthie's young mistress leaves, its owner demands that the keys of the cottage be returned to the agent on or before the fifteenth of January."

Ronla risked being arrested for contempt of court when she exclaimed, "How is it that you are acquainted with the wishes of the owner?"

Lord Haroldean was convulsed with laughter for a few minutes, then answered, still smiling, "Pardon, ladies. I am afraid I have been quite rude, Ronla." Then added, "I guess I must possess a funny-bone like Aunt Ruthie."

"I fail to see what there was in my question to afford you so much amusement," remarked Ronla, rather vexed.

"Of course, you do not, dear; evidently no one told you that the land on the hillside belonged to Lord Haroldean's estate."

Ronla leaned over to grasp her mother's hand and said, with deep feeling, "One day before grandfather died, Aunt Ruthie begged him not to worry, because the Lord would provide for us, somehow, and that he must not trouble about leaving us. Is it not wonderful, mother dear, God must have touched Augustus' heart, even in India, when he spoke to Dr. Roland of this sweet little home."

With tears running unchecked the prisoner looked up into her new son's face and said, with a choke in her voice as she grasped his hand, "Many mysteries are solved now, Ronla, and I have oftentimes wondered how the owner of this cottage could allow us to remain here at such extremely low rental. God bless you, Augustus, you have been a true son to a bereaved mother."

"I do not deserve any thanks; see how selfish I have been, I was afraid I might lose sight of my little India girl, then have no end of trouble to find her."

Ronla laughed in her sweet happy way when her lover further said, "I shall have to hold you ladies for contempt of court if you make another digression from the business of the day. It has been decreed that this certain estimable lady and her Nubian attendant are to be carried peacefully or otherwise to Scarraway dungeons immediately after the wedding."

Ronla's surprised but beaming face was eloquent with thanks and before Mrs. Silveston could reply, his great kindness was so unexpected, his lordship the judge added, "Dr. Mallin is now seeking a cottage where he can bring poor sick waifs out of the village

and town for fresh air and change. If you care to dedicate the cottage for such work, you need not deliver the keys to the agent. Here is the deed," taking a document out of his pocket and added as he laid it in Mrs. Silveston's lap, "Mother to be, Exilesnest is yours. You might call it now Samaritan's Retreat."

The grateful widow was too deeply touched to find fitting words to express her thanks, but Ronla with a little choke in her voice said as she placed her hand in her lover's, "Kind master, pierce my ear, I will be your faithful servant forever." And Mrs. Silveston leaned over and kissed Lord Haroldean, saying, huskily, "God bless you, son, I will see Dr. Mallin."

Ronla was still holding her ear with a most mischievous look.

Marsa Gustus captured her hand and in a merry bantering tone remarked, "Sweetheart, will we not be proud of the charming benefactor of the Samaritan Retreat?"

"Indeed we will," answered the Colonel's daughter, slipping from her chair and affectionately clasping her mother in her arms, saying in tremulous tones, "Oh, momsey dear, wouldn't father have been proud of his new son! Please do not cry, mother; Augustus will think you do not appreciate his great kindness to us."

Tears were running unchecked down Ronla's cheeks. Lord Haroldean took Ronla's vacant seat and gently laying his hand on his fiancée's shoulder said in husky tones, "Darling, to have her presence in our home will be enough thanks."

Aunt Ruthie happened to enter the dining room to look after the "deader" and noting the sad tableau hastened forward and exclaimed, "Fo' de lan' sake! w'at de mattah wid me honey-chile?"

"Nothing, mammy, she is crying because the judge ordered her to be carried off to the abbey on my wedding day. How do you like the idea?"

"Oh, marsa, I'd sez, bress de Lawd ef I wuz gwine—sakes alive! you hain't gwinter ter leab—?"

Mr. Augustus laughed, saying, "What! more tears? Never mind, Aunt Ruthie, of course you are to go—Why! those dears are waiting to be hugged."

Before Lord Haroldean conceived of her intention, the old black auntie quickly stooped, grasped his hand and kissed it, saying chokingly, "Lawd bress yo', marsa, fer dis ole auntie nebber kin, dat's suah! Come, honey, gwine up ter yo' room wid yo' ole mammy. Lawd ha' mussy! dar's sech dynamo 'round dese days I's a-feerd de roof gwinter combed off nex'."

Aunt Ruthie's voice sounded soft and cooing-like and Lord Haroldean smiled as he heard her remark when ascending the stairway, "Honey, dar would be terribl' 'sploshun ef dey tried ter run 'way widout yo' ole nuss, I clar me ole marsa sez, come, Ruthie gal, heah am me preshus chile—yass, honey, yo' is me ole marsa's leg'cy, guess yo' am, an' I jes' gwine ter kar fer yo' while dar's bref in me ole bones."

Later, Aunt Ruthie exclaimed in her quaint way at various stages of her mistress' narrative, but when she spoke of the Samaritan Retreat, she clasped her hands and in her joy she cried, "Bress de Lawd!" But when her mistress also expressed some anxiety

about their being unable to accomplish so much in such a short time, Aunt Ruthie stopped brushing her hair and remarked, "Fo' de lan' sake! doan't bodder, honey, Missie Ronlah kin mak' dem crooky t'ings straight. Laws! me, dar goes Marsa Gustus. I must skeedo now. Chile, shet dem peepers an' doan't spoke on ter Leetle Missie, she hab 'citement nuff fer one day. Good night, honey."

Ronla bade her mother an affectionate good night and passed immediately to her cozy room, which the moonlight made as bright as day; hence, my lady needed no candle rays to assist her as she brushed her shining tresses, nor any other magical power to hie her away to the land of "pleasant dreams."

I am afraid that sleep would have forsaken the happy girl had she been over to the rectory after Nancy and her husband returned with the bond and known how deeply indebted she was to her gallant lover, for when Nancy left the nursery she heard her husband remark casually to someone, "What is Steel today, Augustus?"

"Very low at present."

Nancy rightly interpreted her husband's troubled looks as she remarked on entering the room, "That does not sound well for a trousseau."

"Good afternoon, Nancy; you do not mean that Mrs. Silveston is going to disturb her securities for paltry clothes."

The rector started and gave his wife a warning look.

Lord Haroldean noted her confusion and affectionately laid his hand on her shoulder, having risen

at her entrance. "Please trust me, Nancy. I know Mrs. Silveston will be happier if, in a measure, she is independent of me for her charities and gifts. I would not have her present income lessened for anything. If she wishes to dispose of the bond I will take it and find some way of returning it after we are married."

The rector still hesitated, as it somehow seemed a breach of confidence, but his wife ended the little denouement by remarking, "I am very sorry, dear, if I divulged any state secrets, but, Rolin, it seems to me that Augustus is just as good a buyer as any one else. I really think Mrs. Silveston would forgive us if she were acquainted with all the circumstances."

"Ah, my lady, so I was right. Come, Rolin, give me the bond, I have a check-book with me. I will exonerate you when the times comes. Ronla nor her mother will bother you about the name of the purchaser when they receive the money. My, Nancy, the gods were on my side and prompted me to enter the rectory tonight."

Nancy's eyes were bubbling over with mischief when she lightly answered, "Augustus, I really think you owe a good deal to the gods for so kindly a disposition, I wish every man had such thoughtful considerations of his mother-in-law's feelings."

Lord Haroldean smiled and answered, "Oh! you little flatterer. I guess Ronla will soon learn there is nothing saintly about me, when I get in a towering rage over my valet's stupidity."

The lord of the manor laughed heartily when his cousin replied, "I would advise that you have padded

walls and locked doors when he is about, for it would be a sad pity to uncanonize such a renowned man as St. Augustus."

"Laugh away, fair enchantress, you're safe now that I have possession of that bond; yes, even from the tyranny of yonder parish priest," stooping to kiss her he said in jest, "I will apprise the gods of the charms of my sweetheart's namesake." Grasping cordially the rector's hand he said, "Good-bye, Sir Priest. Thanks for obliging me and do not forget that Vulcan has a thunderbolt cast for the man who fails to appreciate his blessings."

Rolin Netherly laughed and replied, "Beware then, my lord, you are in great danger when proposing to undertake the safe custody of the Colonel's Jewels."

Lord Haroldean laughed, too, as he closed the door.

In a few moments the car left the tiny gate and was speeding its owner toward Haroldean Hall, where Janette and his uncle were awaiting his coming ere repairing to the dining room for the evening meal.

Lord Haroldean was amused at his cousin when she remarked to Lord Scarraway, never once looking at their tardy host, "They say 'the whole world loves a lover,' but, uncle, do you think we do when he keeps us waiting for supper?"

Lord Scarraway smiled indulgently and the lover quickly replied as he caught the little tease around the waist and kissed her, "Poor Rufus! I truly think it is your duty to warn him, uncle, what a dreadful termagant he is proposing to marry."

The car remained before the door and an hour later was again winding its way down the hill toward the comfy white nest of the exiles.

CHAPTER XIII

NEW SETTING AND WITCHIN' EYES

RONLA SILVESTON and her mother's dusky nurse were busy every moment during the two weeks which followed her engagement to Lord Haroldean, even though ably assisted by Aunt Ruthie's honey-chile and her dear friend Nancy.

His lordship complained one day that he was dreadfully neglected and his fiancée answered with the sauciness of a happy school-girl, "I do not dare to allow you many privileges now, or you may neglect me after we are married. See how wise I am?"

Mrs. Silveston laughed quite heartily when her daughter pointed to her and added with most sober face, "In the presence of this witness, my lord, I warn you this day, that I will elope with yonder black sheep if you dare to make me cry."

"It is a direful threat, my lady; will a 'pound of flesh' avert such calamity?"

"No, my lord, nothing can save you. Bring to these eyes one wee tear and we defy the stoutest walls to hold those who own the keys of India's mystical arts."

"Woe is me! my only safety is to bribe yonder black sheep."

"All the gold of Opir could not accomplish that feat, my lord, so heed the warning before too late. Remember! just one wee tear."

And so between tears, laughter and toil the time sped quickly by and the eventful day at length arrived. The trunks were strapped and sent over to Scarraway Abbey the previous afternoon and the bride to be also left the shelter of Exilesnest for the rectory as Nancy had insisted that Aunt Ruthie deserved a rest.

Jane was over the last day to assist straighten the cottage and she returned to "The Blossoms" after Sam, the boots, had conveyed the little party of exiles with their bags and budgets over to the safe refuge of the little stone rectory. Nancy and her husband received them on the porch and the wonderful wedding-gown awaited their coming upstairs.

Mrs. Silveston especially appreciated their kindness and Aunt Ruthie immediately took possession of the nursery and commanded the little nurse maid to go below stairs and assist Rue with the supper.

Later, the young mother ran upstairs to the nursery to rock her child to sleep; not hearing any sounds she quietly opened the door, Aunt Ruthie raised her hand not to speak as she quietly walked across the room and in her kindly way whispered, "Leetle Missie terribl' strepterus dis ebin; she skeedood her nuss ter de kitchen an', sakes alive! runned off ter sleepy-land widout her mammy. Run 'long, honey. Lawds an' brides doan't come ebry ebin. Suah' no!—side Leetle Missie tole me ter 'low no hinterference in dis nussery ter night. Bress her!"

Nancy grasped the dusky hand and her brown eyes danced and flushed many mirthful twinkles as she quietly said, "I am at your mercy, Sir Jailer." Then

she added seriously, "Thank you, Aunt Ruthie, it was very kind of you to put little Ronla to sleep."

"Fo' de lan' sake! Honey, I's done nuffin'. Laws! Leetle Missie an' I hab de most scrumdiferus time; no, doan't tank me agin or I holler, den yo' knows dat sleepy-land hain't very far away."

Nancy smiled and quietly remarked as she ran toward the stairway, "I will escape when I can, but really, it breaks my heart to leave my one ewe lamb in the clutches of such a tyrant."

Nancy certainly enjoyed the evening, thanks to Aunt Ruthie, and had not the slightest thought of what might be happening in the nursery. Ronla and his lordship snatched a few moments alone in the rector's study, but he considerably left at nine o'clock and immediately afterwards the happy party sought their several rooms.

Ronla could not forbear taking another peep at the plain but rich looking dress. Just a few months before the Colonel was killed he presented his wife with a bundle of silver-gray silk and exquisite oriental trimmings for a new evening gown. Not requiring such a dress at that time, the silk was carefully rolled and the trimming placed in a box for safe-keeping until needed. The knowledge that her father had purchased the silk enhanced the value of the gown in Ronla's eyes. Her mother brought forth from the archives several suitable pieces of old lace which added greatly to the beauty of the two new gowns, so after all the changing vicissitudes of the last few years, the Colonel's daughter had something more than one russet gown when she left the shelter of that tiny

home on the hill. Ronla was also the happy possessor of funds hidden away to purchase other things in Paris, through the kindness of the rector in disposing of the bond, the interest of which had once helped to support their tiny home.

Mrs. Silveston shook her head quite emphatically when her daughter jokingly said, "I suppose you will sell the old plantation now that you intend being an English lady?" Smiling, she answered, "Some day, perhaps a descendant of mine might like to find a refuge under the Stars and Stripes. No! While I live, I will not part with my birthright."

The Colonel's daughter received many valuable wedding gifts, but she also appreciated Jane's bunch of garden flowers and the white and gold prayer book. There were many nods and smiles among the little Sunday-school class and the Juniors when they spied their gift in the hand of the charming bride when she walked up the aisle leaning on the fatherly arm of Dr. Mallin, her kind physician and friend.

Janette's fiancé attended the groom as best man.

Lord Haroldean claimed the bride at the steps of the altar from the hand of one who had been the physician in charge of the family at Haroldean Manor House for many years and a gentleman most highly esteemed by his mother.

His lordship's car at Ronla's request awaited their coming at the side vestry room door, where, after the register was signed, the happy couple held an impromptu reception.

Aunt Ruthie was glorious in her new attire and her quaint congratulations as she kissed the bride

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caused much merriment. Janette nearly crushed all Ronla's finery when she kissed and hugged her, saying, "My own sweet cousin. I do not wonder Augustus fell so madly in love with his Indian maiden. I am glad Rufus did not see you until you were to be married."

A kind familiar voice said, "Come, child, you cannot monopolize the bride, I have an old friend waiting to meet her."

Turning, Janette exclaimed in great surprise, "Oh! dear Uncle Sergis, how did you get here?"

"By train, Miss Charming."

Laughing, she stepped aside to allow her uncle to present the tottery old gentleman to the bride. "A very distant relative, Ronla—My Lady Haroldean, Duke Sergis."

Ronla had occasion also to be surprised when the Duke took the bride's hand and gazing searchingly into her lovely face said, "So this is Reginald's daughter. I think I must have a kiss, too, child, for I loved your father very dearly."

Ronla sweetly leaned over to receive the kiss of her father's old friend, and as he still held her hand he said, "My! what news for Silver Star, have you met your cousins yet?"

"No! Duke Sergis, I have not had that pleasure."

"Why not, I pray?"

Her ladyship noted the questioning look vouchsafed her husband; she was rather amused at the blunt questioning of her father's old friend, yet answered demurely, "Is it always wise to speak the truth?"

"Unquestionably so, my lady."

"Well, then, dear Duke, mother did not write because it is not always desirable to know the address of your poor relations."

"Humph! Uncle Sam has retained a little of John Bull's pride, Augustus." Glancing at the smiling groom he added affectionately, "I certainly congratulate you, dear boy, I am delighted that you were not afraid." Grasping the hands of the bride and groom he further remarked, so reverently that it seemed like a second benediction, "In Reginald's name and my own I will say, God bless you both, dear children." Deeply touched, her ladyship impulsively leaned over and kissed her father's loyal friend again, then smiled when Lord Scarraway joined them and said jestingly, "Why, son, I am astonished that you stand idly by and allow his highness to steal your wife's affections."

Merry twinkles lighted the Duke's kindly old eyes when he remarked with his usual grandiloquence, "Lady Harokdean, whenever they malign your character or treat you unkindly, run away to Sergis Castle."

Laughing gleefully the bride answered, cordially, "Thank you so much, dear Duke, they will not dare to treat me otherwise than well now."

Laughing Lord Scarraway bowed to the bride, then said, with his usual bonhommie, "Brides are entrancing, I know." Adding commandingly, "But, come, Cuthbert, I wish you to meet Mrs. Silveston."

Glancing toward the bride the person addressed shook his head, saying, "I am afraid I cannot stand any more loveliness today."

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Lady Haroldean lifted her eyes to her husband and said mischievously, "How fortunate, Duke Sergis had to pay his respects to the bride first." Then addressing her guest he added graciously, "Please grant uncle's request, it would never do for you to travel so far and miss seeing dear daddy's precious Ruby and her shining satellite."

"Satellite? my lady."

Laughing, Lord Scarraway took the old man's arm and answered, "The bride is well aware that this satellite is an unusual sight in these parts, so was wise not wishing you to miss seeing her." Mrs. Silveston was well guarded by Nancy and her ebony 'satellite' when the gentlemen joined them—certainly no mother could help being pleased nor fail to experience a feeling of joyousness in the kindly expressions relating to the charming personality of her beloved child and the gentlemen were delighted to learn how truly grateful she felt for the gift of such a loving son. The Duke laughed heartily when Lord Scarraway inquired anxiously, "Have you a little, just a tiny wee bit, of gratitude for Uncle Knowlton?"

"Duke Sergis, perhaps you might assist me accomplish that herculean feat, else I might be banished from Scarraway Abbey."

"I just informed Lady Haroldean that Sergis Castle is a safe place of refuge, I extend the same privilege to you." Laying aside the bantering tone he added courteously, "In any event I hope to have the pleasure of your company at Stag Head Lodge this fall. In that mountainous solitude, I shall be delighted to show you my pet, Silver Star."

Before Mrs. Silveston could reply, Lord Scarraway remarked anxiously, "You plead in vain if her satellites are to be banished." Adding lugubriously, "Make way! Cuthbert, alackaday! Mrs. Silveston, your satellites are truly banished. Here comes the bride."

That evening when in the steamer which was prodding its way across the English Channel, Lady Haroldean had no regrets for following the dictates of her kindly heart in allowing the church to be opened and would ever treasure the many marks of respect shown her lordly husband by those villagers who had known him all his life and were to partake of his open-hearted hospitality after their departure. On her return to the rectory Nancy had a good cry as she hugged her ladyship's god-child. Yes, even the rector of St. Jude's admitted that he was not sorry that Scarraway Abbey was to pass, some day, into the hands of his lordship's brother, who resided in Australia, because of the hope that Haroldean Hall would again have another charming mistress to assist Mrs. Hewlson in her battle against all spooks, moles and bats. Duke Sergis shed no tears, contrariwise was in a most happy frame of mind when he later alighted from the compartment at Strand. A railway official was lending his assistance when a young gentleman emerged from the crowd, saying, "Why, Uncle Sergis, you are the last person I expected to see here. Take my arm and let us walk over yonder. The world and his family seem to be traveling today." The Duke, nothing loath, accepted the proffered escort and answered cordially, "What do they say about the rustling of angels' wings, Calvin?"

"I certainly feel flattered, uncle. What made you think of me?"

"Wedding."

"A wedding! Who are the lucky parties, uncle?"

The youthful escort was surprised again when his companion shook his head knowingly and evasively answered, "Have you seen the London papers?" Then added soberly, "Ah! here comes my train."

"Have you a compartment engaged?"

"Yes, Calvin—and here comes an official now," shaking hands cordially he added, "So glad to have seen you. Regards to all the family."

Mystified by the speaker's manner when arriving at a fashionable club house, the baffled traveler walked straight to the reading room and before joining his father, who was deeply engrossed in a book at the far end of the sumptuous apartment, stopped to glance at the morning papers. The very first, large-typed headline that attracted the searcher's eye read: "A Wedding in High Life." Article ran on as follows: "A marriage of great interest socially will take place at St. Jude's, Haroldean Heights, at high noon today. At last Lord Haroldean succumbs to the charms of a Miss Silveston, daughter of a gallant colonel who lost his life while fighting for his country in India. Reginald du Ponce Silveston was the youngest brother of Lord Silveston, our honored member of Parliament from Northumberland. Colonel Silveston was on the Governor's staff at the time of his death and was buried with military honors at Bombay. Miss Silveston's mother was the daughter of one of America's celebrated surgeons and her

grandfather a wealthy planter, whose fine estate was situated near Richmond, Virginia. Lord and Lady Haroldean expect to return, after a short honeymoon, to Scarraway Abbey to be present at the nuptials of Lady Janette Knowlton, whose wedding will be one of the social events of the winter. Cards of invitation will be especially prized—it is not every wedding feast that is enhanced by the beauty of a historic old abbey, a lovely Indian bride and an American heiress who is always attended by one of Nubia's fair daughters."

Astonishment, mingled with regret, shone in the reader's eyes when he walked over to his father's isolated corner and drawing a chair whispered, "It is plain you have not been interesting yourself with the morning news since I have been gone."

"Why, son?"

"Read this," handing him the paper. The speaker was amused at the expression of surprise, and when Lord Silveston finished perusing the article the bearer of the tidings remarked, gravely, "And who do you suppose suggested my glancing at the morning news?"

"Who?"

"Uncle Sergis, he was at the wedding."

Removing his glasses in a nervous manner Lord Silveston answered excitedly. "Wonder what he thinks of our absence?"

"Thinks!" exclaimed the traveler contemptuously, "What can he think, except that we are a lot of darned fool cads. I told you when Uncle Reginald married he was too fine a man to marry any old Hottentot."

"Wonder Reginald's wife did not notify us they were in England."

The younger man's lips curled and his answer was tinged with sarcasm when he said, crossly, "Our loving treatment after uncle's death would warrant her caring to know us."

"No use being so perturbed, son, they have not suffered by our neglect when my niece landed the finest catch of the season. Reginald's wife has my highest regard, I hope I may tell her so sometime." Adding sadly, "I only wish our motherless child had such a friend now."

"Well then, father, if you think she would return 'good for evil' invite her to the old manor-house after the hunting season."

Lord Silveston, smiling, answered affectionately, "Well planned, son, I appoint you a committee of one to investigate the matter."

Rising, the person addressed answered, smiling, "If we receive cards to Janette's wedding, my task will not be an arduous one. I am off for a game of billiards; you know where to find me when you want to leave." Heaving a sigh of relief, Lord Silveston swung the book rack over and in short space of time had forgotten the distractions caused by "A Wedding in High Life."

The forlorn condition of the old plantation, with its solitary cabin, caused a smile of amusement to pass over Aunt Ruthie's honey-child's face when she read that she was an American heiress and laughed when her old mammy remarked, "Laws! I's guess I's putty free w'en yo' nuss hul outer dis bressed fambly, I clar', I's nebber git restercratical nuff ovah dar in 'Meriky ter hab me name in de papers." Adding

chuckling, "Hit's suah, de most unlikliest t'ing me ole pap tho't out. Sakes alive! Honey, me ole marsa nebber prognostigated he wuz eddicating leetle brack Ruthie ter sociate with lawds an' ladies. Missie Ronlah, bress her, fotched us out de mire suah."

"Why, mammy, I never saw any mire around Exilesnest."

"Now you pokin' fun like Lettle Missie, an' tryin' ter spile my putty figafied speeches. Laws me, hain't yo' shamed, honey." On arrival at the abbey a suite of four rooms was placed at the disposal of Aunt Ruthie and her honey-child. That evening when the old nurse was combing Mrs. Silveston's hair she said, joyously, "Laws, honey, I could sing Hallelujah ter de Great Marsa fer all his marcies. Does yo' t'ink, chile, dey knows up dar dat Lettle Missie am so happy." After a pause added, "Dat wuz de bestest oprashun Marsa Doctah eber did—dat's suah!"

"Yes, mammy, during those sad days in India I little thought such blessings would come to us now."

"Dat's right, chile, we nebber knows w'en we casts dat mite ob bread in de wattah w'en hit gwine ter slide back." Adding tenderly, "Missie Ronla helped her ole mammy thro' many brack clouds. Bress her! I clar de Kulnel be'n monstus proud ov his lovely darter ter-day, honey—"

"Indeed he would, mammy, and grandfather too. Your 'Marsa Gustus' never mentioned that he expected Duke Sergis to come to the wedding, the Colonel often spoke of him, I certainly was delighted to meet him today. Stag Head Lodge is near the old Manor

House; that visit I shall anticipate with great pleasure. Pesky 'lawds' are pretty nice after all, eh, mammy?" Before the old auntie could answer the speaker added, soberly, "If you receive any disrespect in the servants' hall, let me know, Lord Scarraway requested me to tell you to do so."

"Clar ter goodness, honey, doan't bodder yo' poor head 'bout me. Laws! dar's clouds an' sunshine ebrywhar in dis wurd. Yass, suah! yo's can't specs nuffin dif'ent. Lan' sake! de cottage hab hits 'vant-ages, suah hit hab; but den dar wuz dat terribl' ebilly root spookin' 'round tryin' ter push yo' out de door. I clar, chile, dat wuz a skeery feelin'." The old auntie gazed around the sumptuous apartment and Mrs. Silveston smiled when she added complacently, "No, honey, I's doan't seed any dat pesky root 'bout heah."

"Money is not to be maligned, mammy, surely you know its right use brings many blessings."

"Law, honey, yo' old nuss hain't 'plainin'. Laws! dese wings be a sproutin' ef dar wuzn't som' pesky ebil 'bout. I clar, chile, Marsa Skeery-way am a fine gemmen an' I's knows hit won't be his faults ef we hain't happy heah. Bress him!" Stretching out the hand that held the brush, she further remarked, "Me musselly string hain't dead yit—Ha! Ha! Ha. Laws! doan't bodder yo' deah head 'bout yo' ole mammy."

"Musselly strings!" echoed Mrs. Silveston, then added anxiously, "Do you anticipate any pitched battles? My, mammy, I hope we will not cause such a disturbance as that in this beautiful abbey."

"Laws, honey, doan't bodder 'bout yo' ole nuss.

I clar I's marcies nuff widout fistycuffin, dat's suah!"

"Yes, mammy, our lines are fallen in pleasant places, here in this historic old abbey."

"Suah dey am, chile, an' may de Lawd bress yo' fer bein' so good ter dis ole brack mammy."

The late Colonel's Ruby remarked, smiling, "I know who will receive the reward for unselfishness and goodness." Then she added wistfully, "I have not had strength enough to accomplish very much."

Aunt Ruthie grasped her honey-child's hand and said, affectionately, "Fo' de lan' sake! w'at yo' talkin' 'bout, honey, yo' knows de good Book sez he dat 'tarries by de stuff' git's 'warded jes' de same as de sojer who gwine inter battle."

Gazing up into the old dusky face Mrs. Silveston replied, "It will not be your fault if I miss any blessing," then she added soberly, "Listen, mammy, I have a surprise for you, Lord Scarraway told me at dinner that Mrs. Roland has never fully recovered from last summer's attack of fever and her physicians recommend a sea trip." Aunt Ruthie's face lighted up suddenly like a burst of sunshine after a storm, when her lovely mistress excitedly remarked, "His lordship expects them to be present at Janette's wedding, and remain at the abbey at least a week."

"Bress yo', honey, dat am a spankin' fine sprise." The speaker was a 'hul bunch ob smiles an' chuckles' when she further remarked, "Does yo' t'ink yo' ole nuss could bribes dat chefic cook? I clar! hit'll be ha—monstrussy shame fer Parsun Rolie ter be han-kerin' atar dem Virginny rolls."

Smiling, Mrs. Silveston answered, "I think Lord Scarroway might manage it for you—Mrs. Matly seems like a kind, obliging person—Miss Janette says she is a most competent able manager." The speaker added emphatically, "Remember, not one word to the bride or 'Marsa Gustus.'"

"I'll nebber spoke on a word, honey. Sakes alive! won't Leetle Missie be powerful pleased. Laws! Misses Rolie am jes' de kind of a saint dis ole mammy lobes—dat's suah!"

"What kind of a saint? Please tell your honey-child, she wants to be loved too."

"Law, I clar, honey, yo' jes' like Leetle Missie." Then the old auntie added soberly, "Yo' jes' knows Auntie Rolie gwines round teachin', nussin' and cheerin' dem pesky hathen injins, 'widout makin' no vultury flappin' noises. Laws! ef she nebber spoke on a word yo' can't be neah her long before yo' knows she am marchin' under de banner ob de 'Great God of Marcy.'"

"You never spoke a truer word, mammy, even her touch was full of loving, tender sympathy." The speaker added musingly, "To be a co-worker with God—what a blessed privilege!" Surely, the exiles had been led on through heat and cold, sunshine and storm, grief and joy. Resting that night under the panoply of her heavenly Father's love in that historic old abbey the Colonel's Ruby touchingly read as their evening meditation:

"Brightly gleams our banner
Pointing to the sky,
Waving wanderers onward
To their home on high.

Often have we left Thee,
Often gone astray;
Keep us, mighty Saviour,
In the narrow way."

Tears glistened in Aunt Ruthie's eyes when she reverently muttered—"Amen."







